THE PATTERN of Pure and Undefiled RELIGION,

Exhibited in the Preaching and Life of the HOLY JESUS:

Shewing the true Genius and Spirit of Christianity.

WITH

An Introduction

Concerning the restoring of true Religion by Jesus Christ, and his Kingdom.

Non enim qui immaculatas Hostias cædit, qui thuris Acervos dat igni concremandos, Numina censendus est colere: Cultus verus in pectore est, & oppinatio de Deo digna, &c. Arnob. contr. Gentil. l. 4.

By *GEORGE RAYMOND*, M. A. Minister at St. *Lawrence* in *Ipswich.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1689.

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To the Honourable

PEYTON VENTRIS, Esq;

One of the Justices of Their Majesties Court of Common-Pleas.

SIR,

WHen I had once determin'd to let these Papers see the Light, I could not in the least hesitate about their Dedication. Not that they are worthy of your Name or Patronage, upon any other account, but their subject-matter, and pious design only; but that custom hath prescribed to men of our Function this way, (as seldom having any other) of confessing their Obligations, and

expressing their Gratitude. In compliance with such custom, I chose rather to incur the censure of Presumption, for affixing your *Honourable* Name to so small a performance; than that of Ingratitude, by passing over in silence the great Obligations you have laid upon me. However, I perceive I must not descend to particulars, nor yet attempt the Blazonry of your Merit; not for fear of being suspected of Flattery, but of offending your Vertuous Modesty; and of swelling the Dedication into a greater Bulk than the Treatise it self.

I therefore only take leave to Congratulate, not so much Your self as the *Publick*, your being placed in that Eminent Station,

in

in which, as I am ſure you will always be an Eminent Example, and aſſiduous Patron of *Pure and undefiled Religion*; ſo I doubt not but your *great Worth*, by becoming more conſpicuous, will command that Eſteem and Veneration from all Men, that it doth from

Your moſt obliged,

Humble and

Affectionate Servant,

Geo. Raymond.

TO THE READER.

THE *Knowledge of God in Jeſus Chriſt, containeth not the reſolution of Philoſophic Curioſities, and Scholaſtic Diſputes; ſuch as the Order of the Divine Decrees, the conſiſtence of the divine* agency *with Man's* liberty, *and of the divine* Providence *with the* contingence *of Events; with other ſuch like Speculations, of which yet ſome Syſtems of Chriſtian Religion are wont to be compounded. This is to me moſt evident, from the declared neceſſity and uſefulneſs of the Chriſtian Doctrine; which can't be affirmed of thoſe fruitleſs ſpeculations, without the knowledge whereof Men may (and muſt, if at all) be wiſe and happy; as alſo, from the deep ſilence of ſacred Writ concerning thoſe points, and the quite different te-*

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nour of its voice and inſtruction; and from the remaining Diſputes about thoſe things, the queſtions continuing ſtill in the ſame undecided ſtate, in which the Pagan Philoſophers left them, and rather embaraſs'd and puzled, than diluciated and reſolv'd by later Schoolmen.

But the effuſion of Goſpel-Revelation and Grace, is certainly vouchſafed by God, to render men truly wiſe and eminently good: to add a new light and authority to the Principles *of true Religion, and obligation and aſſiſtance to the* Practice, *and to furniſh and maintain a quick and powerful ſenſe thereof. We therefore ought to ſearch the holy Scriptures, and acquaint our ſelves with them; not that we may be provided for* ſubtile *Diſputes, but that we may be impregnated with a* divine nature *and Heavenly diſpoſitions: that we may build up our ſelves on our moſt holy Faith, and keep our ſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto Eternal Life.*

Jud. 20, 21.

To aſſiſt in ſuch a uſe of the holy Scriptures,

ptures, ought to be the ſcope of all Books of Religion; and is the mark aimed at in this. In which I have endeavoured ſuch a repreſentation of the general deſign of Chriſtianity, and in particular of the Doctrine and Life of Jeſus; which being received and becoming familiar, may lead men into a wiſe underſtanding of their holy Religion; *and direct and help them to draw from the* ſacred fountains *the true and proper nouriſhment of the divine life. This taſte of the* ſincere milk of the Word, *may ſerve to prepare and excite the appetite; that it ſhall covet only ſuch repaſt as is agreeable and good, and have a quick ſenſe and ſavoury reliſh of that which is ſo.*

Intending ſuch a taſte *only, I was obliged to couch things as cloſe as I could; and to offer brief hints rather than a ſtrict diſcourſe upon each particular. Yet I hope this brevity hath not hindered, but that moſt things may be ſufficiently plain to the underſtanding of attentive Readers; and I fear too plain for the Conſciences of moſt, who had rather dwell in Clouds and thick darkneſs,*

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finding nothing but matter of ſelf-accuſation and reproach, in ſuch intelligible Notions *of Religion.*

Two Requeſts I have to ask of the Reader. The one, that he be not too haſty and ſevere in cenſuring this Eſſay; which doth not pretend to exactneſs and perfection: but is (ſo far as I know) the firſt in its kind, and offereth it ſelf to be improved and finiſhed by better hands. Yet withal, if the Cenſurer pleaſe to try, he ſhall be forced to confeſs, that 'tis not poſſible to draw the moral, *any more than the* natural *Picture of our bleſſed Saviour to the Life. The other Requeſt is, that he will afford this Diſcourſe more than a Curſory reading; and that if any thing ſtrike him upon the firſt view, he will allow it a farther conſideration. For my hope is, That the hints here offered, will become more uſeful, the more familiar they are made; and may inſtil by degrees, a true reliſh of the* wiſdom and goodneſs *of our holy Religion; and a true tincture of the excellent* temper and ſpirit *thereof.*

To which good effect, God Almighty prosper the labour and pious intention both of the Author and the Reader; for his mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Intro-

Introduction

Concerning the reſtoring of true Religion by Jeſus Chriſt, *and his Kingdom.*

THE Meſſiah was promiſed for a light unto the Gentiles, *Iſa.* 42.6. by that name the Jewiſh Maſters call him, and *John* the Baptiſt proclaimeth him, *the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the World:* and our Saviour averreth frequently of himſelf, that *he is the light of the World, and he that followeth him ſhall not abide in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of Life.* By this is ſignified to us the extream neceſſity, the glorious Excellency, the quickning and refreſhing Influence of his Doctrine and Example: whereby when the World lay in Midnight-darkneſs,

Joh. 1. 9.

Joh. 8.12. c. 9. 5. c. 12. 35. &c.

darkneſs, they had their Eyes opened, and were marvellouſly enlightened, their Ignorance relieved, their Errours and Prejudices diſpoſſeſſed and driven away; and they being raiſed from the deep ſleep of ſin, were turned from darkneſs to light; from the power of Satan unto God.

This Light of Life, diſperſed throughout the Goſpel of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, 'tis the deſign of this little Tract to collect, for inſtruction in the true *Spirit and Genius* of Chriſtian Religion. For ſince to be a Chriſtian is to put on Chriſt, *i. e.* to imitate him, by copying out the Excellencies of his Spirit, and Holineſs of his Life; it is neceſſary we ſhould have the true Idea of his Mind and Spirit, and the true Characters of his holy Converſation in intimate knowledge, and conſtant remembrance, as well as in higheſt veneration and love. Our profeſſion obliging us to walk as he walked, and the efficacy of Example conſiſting much in being acted before our Eyes,

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It is highly neceſſary that we *look unto Jeſus*; form to our ſelves ſuch an exact Idea of his Life, that ſeeing him (as it were) walking before us in every path of Vertue, we may follow him more accurately, treading in his ſteps.

In this conſiſts the true ſtudy and uſe of the holy Goſpels; not in learning to make or defend Syſtems and Scheems of Orthodox Opinions, but in receiving the *light of Life*, or as the Apoſtle calls it, in 1 *Cor.* 2. 16. *the mind of Chriſt*, i. e. the imbibing the true ſenſe and tincture of his Heavenly Doctrine, and partaking of his Spirit therein lively expreſs'd, that *beholding as in a Glaſs the glory of the Lord, we be changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, by the ſpirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18.

In order hereunto it muſt be ever remembred, that Jeſus was manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the Devil; to reſcue Religion from that depravation, which was the diſhonour of God, and reproach of Man;

and to reſtore Men at once to Truth and Happineſs. The Mind therefore and Spirit of his Doctrine will be beſt conceived, as oppoſite to thoſe pernicious Errours, which had depraved Religion, debauched the Lives, and enſlaved the Spirits of Men; which had brought them to become Vaſſals of Satan, the Author and Abetter of ſuch falſe Opinions and wicked Practices. Chriſtianity is to be conſidered as a ſupplement to natural Religion, reſtoring it from depravation, adding a new light, authority and ſanction to the truths and precepts thereof; and by confirming what was doubtful through the ignorance and prejudices of Men, clearing what was dark, rectifying what was abuſed or miſtaken, reducing Men to the true knowledge of God, and rendring them true Worſhippers of him.

To this reſtauration of Religion, and of Man, it was neceſſary; firſt to ſet them upon a firm baſis and foundation, by enlightning their darkneſs,

darkneſs, ſatisfying their doubts, and helping their infirmity; and then to prevent their falling again (which they are extreamly prone to do) into theſe pernicious conceits by which they had departed from God, were captivated unto Satan, and enſlaved in his Kingdom of darkneſs.

In order to the firſt, *viz.* the fixing Mens Minds upon a ſolid foundation, by ſatisfying their important Doubts, relieving their Ignorance, and helping their Infirmity; 'twas neceſſary for the Saviour of the World, 1. To reconcile God to Man by a *propitiatory* Sacrifice. 2. To demonſtrate the *Immortality of the Soul*, the certainty of a future Life and Judgment. 3. To *reveal* the object of Worſhip. 4. To ſet a *perfect* Example of Life. 5. To *ſuccour* Men with ſupernatural Grace, a ſtrength Divine.

Firſt, A propitiatory Sacrifice, and the moſt ſolemn Declaration that could be, of God's being reconciled to returning Sinners, was neceſſary

to pacify Mens guilty Conſciences, to ſatisfy their diffident and doubtful minds, to make an end of all that anxious, buſy, and fruitleſs Religion of Expiations, which could neither purge the Conſcience, nor improve the Man; which by becoming the chief ſubject of religious ſolicitude, joſtled true Religion, *i. e.* Wiſdom and Goodneſs out of the World. Natural Religion knows no Sacrifice but Euchariſtical; 'tis a ſervice of Love and Gratitude: but guilt is diffident and anxious; ſin begets dread of God, as well as alienation from him; and he that knows himſelf ſadly in arrears to the Divine Juſtice, and obnoxious to Almighty Anger, muſt firſt be ſatisfied, that that Juſtice and Anger appeas'd, and God reconciled, before he can be prevail'd with to love, and thankfulneſs and holy imitation; that is, before he can be made to repent and return unto God.

2Co. 5.19. Rom. 3.25. 1Jo. 4.10. God therefore *was in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf*; ſetting him

him forth a *propitiation* for the ſins of it; declaring himſelf reconciled, and publiſhing an Act of Oblivion, and Patents of Grace and Pardon ratified and ſeal'd, with the bloud of that moſt ineſtimable Sacrifice. By the moſt ſolemn, ſacred, ſenſible and affectionate pledges of his love, he hath aſſured us that he wills not the death of Sinners; but his will is their return and happineſs; that he will communicate himſelf to his Creatures, according to their capacity; and that Repentance is a ſure *Capacity* for his greateſt Bleſſings, but impenitence the only accurſed thing that ſeparates from God; and that becauſe it renders uncapable of thoſe bleſſed ſtreams, which are ever flowing from the inexhauſtable Fountain of Divine Goodneſs.

And as by the bloud of Jeſus he hath pacified the Conſcience of Sinners; ſo by the revelation of his divine Mercy and Goodneſs, by the Promiſe of the holy Spirit, and of Eternal Life, he hath revived their

deſponding Hearts; he hath begotten them again to a lively hope, that
1 Pet. 1.3. Rom. 15. 13. *they may be filled with joy and peace in believing, and abound with hope, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt:* that they may return with humble Confidence, and chearful readineſs to him, who waits for that happy opportunity to ſhew them mercy; and being reconciled to God by Faith and Repentance, may be inſeparably united unto him, in love and hope, and the participation of his holy Spirit.

Secondly, To the Reſtauration of true Religion, 'twas fundamentally neceſſary to baniſh all doubtfulneſs about the immortality of the Soul; and to render the future Life and Judgment indiſputably certain. Men loſt, with their Innocence, their hope in God; and the ſenſe of thoſe immortal Capacities the divine goodneſs had beſtowed upon them. They corrupted alſo that Tradition which ſhould have ſupported their hope; and forgot both what their Reaſon, and their Fathers had told them from God,

God, concerning his design to make them Eternally happy. And the Arguments of Philosophy were too fine and artificial, to encounter the prejudices of Lust, and jealousies of guilt; and to perswade minds that knew very little of God or of themselves; that rather dreaded the presence than desired the enjoyment of the Divinity; and whose secular Religion taught them to look for no other rewards, than the averting a misfortune or a plague, or the procuring the comforts and emoluments of this Life. And with the Philosophers themselves, their most labour'd Discourses did not conclude strongly; but inferred only a feeble hope, and a disputable probability. They proved Man capable of Immortal Happiness; but a mind overgrown with corruption, depress'd with guilt, and a terrible dread of the Divine Majesty, could not strongly conclude, that God will finish that Capacity, and confer so great a Blessing; nay, could scarce entertain a thought or desire of it.

Ut averteretur imminens ira, vel ut jam tumens & sæviens placaretur. Cæcil. in Minut. Fœlic.

God therefore ſent his Son from Heaven, that he might *bring life and immortality to light*; to make a plain diſcovery of the important truths relating to Eternal Life: and to make Faith of them in an eaſy and convincing method, rational and ſure in it ſelf, and yet aptly accommodated to the meaneſt underſtandings. God hath pledged his veracity for the truth of what Jeſus taught in this matter; by the Miracles which he and his followers wrought; and confirmed our Faith, by raiſing him from the dead. His Reſurrection is a demonſtration of the poſſibility and certainty of ours; and a pledge of his coming to judge the World. And *if we believe not, we make God a Lyar; becauſe we receive not the Record that God gave of his Son: and this is the record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life; and this life is in his Son*, 1 Joh. 5. 11, 12. Moreover the Declaration of the Divine Goodneſs, and the propitiation and redemption, through the bloud of Jeſus,

ſus, by exciting our love of God, and creating a hope in him, do facilitate our Belief of this his gracious Promiſe, how vaſt ſoever the contents of it be.

Thirdly, It was alſo neceſſary, in order to the reſtoring of true Religion, to reveal and declare the object of Worſhip; the true, but (to the generality of Mankind) *unknown God:* whom they ſerved not at all, or ignorantly worſhipped. The ſervice of innumerable Patron-deities, as immediate ſuperintendents of humane affairs, had joſtled out the ſervice of the ſupream God; who had no publick offices, nor proper Rites appropriated to him: and the worſhip of wrong objects, alienated the minds of the Worſhippers from the true one. They ſerved Creatures ſo much more than the Creator, and gave his glory in ſuch ſort unto them; that 'twas impoſſible, for underſtandings ſo anxiouſly ſuperſtitious and given to Idolatry, ſtrongly to intend the true Deity, or to retain

tain any tolerable knowledge of him. The worſhip proper to God, was rendered to Angels, or Heavenly Intelligences; and to the Sun, Moon and Stars, their reputed Seats or Temples; to Aerial Spirits the Meſſengers and Miniſters of the Celeſtial ones; and to *Baalim*, or the Cannonized Ghoſts of departed men; and ſuch too, (according to the report of their own Writers) whoſe Lives had nothing worthy of God in them. And what was ſtill worſe, the Spirits of darkneſs, theſe Enemies of God and Man, exacted divine honours from their ignorant Vaſſals; who offered to them the deareſt pledges of their Lives and Fortunes: *they ſacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils*, Pſal. 106. 37. They ſerved theſe with mournful, barbarous, cruel and unnatural Rites, as authors of evil; they *atoned them, that they might not hurt, or might drive evil from them.* Yea they pay'd their homage, not only to intelligent beings, but to Images and Shrines, to inanimate

His ne noceant, &c. Arnob. adv. gent. l. 7.

inanimate and irrational Creatures; to bruit Beaſts, and to the moſt vile and miſchievous of them; to Dogs, and Serpents and Crocodiles. Yea they ſuperſtitiouſly venerated every thing that look'd high, or great, or ſtrange; lofty Trees, thick Groves and dark Grots, great Rivers, Lakes and Ponds, were regarded as having Divinity in them. To ſuch madneſs doth ſuperſtition indulged carry men; to ſuch reprobation of mind are they liable, who depart from the ſpiritual ſervice of God, and by ſenſible objects of worſhip, change his Glory into a Lye; who firſt ſerve the Creature beſide, and then more than the Creator who is Bleſſed for ever.

Oppida tota canem venerantur, &c. Juvenal, Sat. 15.

Lucus frequens arboribus altiſſimis, ſpecus in magnam laxitatem excavatus, animam quâdam Religionis ſuſpicione percutient. Magnorum fluminum capita veneramur. Stagna quædam vel opacitas vel immenſa altitudo ſacravit. Senec. Epiſt. 41.

Whilſt the minds of men were thus debaſed with unworthy, and diſtracted with various objects of worſhip; God ſet up his memorial with the people of *Iſrael*; and taught them to direct their worſhip aright,

to

to the Maker of all things, the Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth. Who alſo was the God that redeem'd them from *Ægyptian* Slavery, by terrible wonders, and a mighty power; that appeared gloriouſly on Mount *Sinai*; that went before them in the Pillar of Cloud and Fire; that afterwards ſat down between the Cherubims, as on a Throne; and dwelt in the Temple as in a Royal Palace, the God and King of *Iſrael*. The Laws he gave, and the Rites he appointed them, had this prime intent, to be ſigns and bands of unity between God and them; to direct their worſhip to the true object, and to reſtrain them from wandring after the Gods of the Nations that were round about them.

But as this remedy was appropriated to one people, ſo neither did it effectually cure their Idolatry; but they continued ſtill fond of the way of the Heathen, and made frequent Apoſtaſies into it. God therefore in the fullneſs of time, ſent out of

of his Boſom his Son; That *Eternal Word, and Prince of Angels, neither unbegotten like God, nor created like Man, who unites the Creator and the Creature, and is the Mediator betwixt them*, as *Philo* deſcribes him. This eternal Lord, and Heir of all things, who preſided over the Iſraelites in the Cloudy Pillar, who appeared to *Moſes* and the Elders on the Mount burning with Fire, who exhibited a glorious preſence in the Tabernacle and Temple, and delivered infallible Oracles from between the Cherubims; he in the fullneſs of time *tabernacled in our Fleſh, and dwelt among men* as one of them; and exhibited a more true and divine *Sheckina*, or preſence; *for his glory was as became the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*, Joh. 1. 12. In him the Father was manifeſted, and revealed by him; who hath expreſly commanded all men to repent of their Idolatry, and to worſhip God only; to direct their Prayers to God in Heaven, and not to ſeek him

Phil. Jud. lib. de Hæred. rer. divin.

him in any ſymbol on Earth; nor through any medium, but that of his Eternal Son, *who is the brightneſs of his glory, the expreſs image of his perſon; in whom the Godhead dwells, the Father being in him, and he in the Father, ſo that the Father and he are one.*

Heb. 1. 3. Coloſ. 2. 9. Joh. 10. 30, 39.

Right reaſon confeſſeth the Unity of God, inaſmuch as he being ſupream, knows no equal, and being All-ſufficient needs no Partner; and neceſſity of Exiſtence, can't reaſonably be affirm'd of more than one *moſt perfect* Eſſence. But underſtandings depreſſed by ſenſe, and depraved by Worldly Luſt, firſt ſought God in a Symbol; and chain'd him to a place, for the better reſort to him on all emergencies. And when they had framed in their imaginations a local God, their Fancy multiplied Deities, as their Superſtition did Shrines; and 'twas a pleaſure to think, they had ſo many Patrons of their perſons and affairs, Gods to addreſs themſelves unto, or to go before

fore them upon all occaſions. This groſs but pleaſing deluſion, could not be ſufficiently detected, but by a light from Heaven; God from thence revealing, and aſſerting the perfection and unity of his Eſſence; letting the World know aſſuredly, that there is none beſide him; nor any other Image or Symbol of his Divinity, but the Eternal Son, who is the brightneſs of his Glory, and never to be conceiv'd of without the Father, nor any other Miniſter of his Providence, worthy of divine honour; but that the Holy Ghoſt, the Author of all divine gifts is ſo: being the Eternal Spirit of the Father and the Son. Upon this Baſis he hath fixed the wandring minds of Men, determined and directed their worſhip; condemning the conceit of many Gods, and many Lords or Mediators, as falſe and wicked; for that *there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him*, 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6.

5, 6. This one God, that made the World, and all things therein, is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, neither is worſhipped with Mens hands, as though he needed any thing; but he it is that giveth unto all, Life and Breath, and all things, *Acts* 17. 24.

Fourthly, To reſtore true Religion, 'twas neceſſary to redeem Men from their vain converſation, received by tradition from their Fathers, by ſetting them a perfect pattern of Life; both to demonſtrate what is the ſervice agreeable to God, and that ſuch holy living is practicable by Man. Falſe Religion was not only wrong in the object, but alſo in the matter and inſtances of worſhip; it loſt the true God amongſt the croud of leſſer Deities, and his true worſhip amongſt the heap of childiſh and unprofitable Ceremonies. Its Votaries were very buſy, and its ſervice full of noiſy labour, of pomp and pageantry: but the Rites,

ſome

ſome of them were unreaſonable and fooliſh, much below, not only the Majeſty of God, but the dignity of Man; others lewd or cruel, magical and unnatural, contrary to humanity, a reproach and provocation to the Author of our Beings, but ſingular ſymptoms of reprobate minds, and badges of ſlavery to wicked Spirits. And whilſt their Gods were repreſented as Patrons of Vice, and their moſt ſacred myſteries were ſhameful *works of darkneſs*, their Religion ingaged them in lewdneſs and inhumanity; what could be expected in common converſation, but ſuch a deluge of wickedneſs as is deſcribed, *Rom.* 1. 29. filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs, envy, murder, deceit, malignity; void of Piety, Charity, Mercy, Faith, yea, even of natural Affection.

This vain converſation was received by Tradition, and confirmed by cuſtom; and better Examples were very rare, and thoſe extreamly de-

fective: and the Diſcourſes of Philoſophers (whom the vulgar regarded as a few ſingular and odd men, and ſuſpected of Atheiſm) were of little force againſt the torrent of cuſtom, in which themſelves too were not a little involved. Tradition, Law and Cuſtom, had made Religion to conſiſt in performing the wonted Rites; but ſolid vertue, as no part thereof, but a needleſs and impracticable theory, was abandoned to the ſpeculation of the Learned. Jeſus therefore came to reſtore Religion, not only by the *light* of Heavenly Doctrine, but by the *Luſtre* of a great Example. His Life demonſtrated wherein the Kingdom of God conſiſts; the Works that are acceptable, and the Perſons that are dear to him. His Example exhibits an invincible conviction, of the neceſſity, the beauty, and the practicableneſs of a holy Converſation; of a Life, wiſe, and good, and uſeful; of a Spirit unbiaſs'd by the intereſts of the Fleſh, and the World, deaf to their ſolicitations,

tations, and unſhaken by all their terrours. He demonſtrated to the World, that the Servants of God muſt not be ſlothful, or idle, but buſy Miniſters of his Providence and Grace; and be ſhewed too, that their buſineſs did not conſiſt in operoſe Ceremonies, Bodily exerciſes, or trivial Rites; but in doing good, and diſtributing the gifts of Heaven, in watching over our ſelves and others, in a perſevering practice of Godlineſs, Righteouſneſs and Sobriety, in charitable and humble miniſtrations unto men; and a profeſſed ſervice, and conſtant imitation of the true God. By his own Example, and that of his immediate Followers, as ſo many concurring Lights, making a path to ſhine after them, he deſcribed the way to Heaven, and the enjoyment of God; demonſtrated beyond exception, the neceſſity of holineſs to the Viſion of God, and the poſſibility of that purity which qualifies for the enjoyment of him.

In operoſis Ceremoniis, & ritibus ad digitos tantum pertinentibus. Lactant.

Laſtly, To the reſtauration of Religion, and of Man, 'twas neceſſary to quicken thoſe who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, not only by a great Example, but with a divine Principle and ſupernatural ſtrength. Inſtruction and Example were proper to awaken the underſtanding, and to excite the Conſcience; but the Law in the Members, is not ſo eaſily ſubjected to the Law in the Mind: Inclination and Paſſion is too ſtrong for the efforts of *naked* Reaſon; beloved Luſt, and enſlaving cuſtom, will not give place to wiſer emulation; ſo that this ſtruggle between the Fleſh and Spirit, doth but demonſtrate the power of corrupt inclination, and the ſtrength of vitious habit. They who with the mind ſerved, *i.e.* approved and conſented to the Law of God; were ſtill by reaſon of the Fleſh, ſubjected to the Law of Sin. Though the Conſcience was awaken'd, the Will was enſlaved; and whatever feeble
Rom. 7. deſires and imperfect choice, an in-
lightened

lightened understanding might produce; yet they that were accustomed to do evil, could not find how to perform that which is good: the good they would, they did not, but the evil they would not, that they did. Their judgment condemned their practice; but though an awaken'd Conscience set the Man against himself, yet inclination and custom mastered the judgment, and carried all before them; and held them in Captivity to Sin, and thereby to the powers of darkness.

Under this wretched Slavery, the generality of Mankind was insensible, and harden'd; but those that felt their yoke, were nevertheless subjected to it: and whilst they disputed about the origine of Sin, submitted to the dominion of it: They could not tell, whether Man in his present state, were the ruins of somewhat that had been great; or whether his nature had only the Rudiments and Foundation of some greater excellencies to be built upon

Θεὸς καὶ Δαίμων. de Iſid. & Oſir.

it: whether there were two firſt Principles, the one of good, the other of evil; (which was the moſt ancient and univerſal opinion, as *Plutarch* tells us) or whence elſe thoſe lapſes and errours of the humane Soul, ſhould proceed; whence it was, that the brutiſh part had enſlaved the rational, and the ſenſitive appetite broke looſe from the governing power. They knew not the head of this over-flowing *Nile*; but found themſelves involved in the Inundation: whilſt their underſtandings reaſoned tolerably well of Vertue, their inclinations engaged them powerfully in Vice: So that either deſpairing of liberty, they tamely yielded to the torrent of inclination and cuſtom, or elſe with great perplexity, but little ſucceſs, ſtrove againſt the mighty ſtream; and in ſo great a ſtreight (as was natural) look'd up to God, (ἐλπὶς γὰρ Ἀρετῆς) who is the hope of Vertue, but not the Patron of Sloth and Cowardize. Although they ſometimes magnified humane

Πταίσματα ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς. Simpl. in Epictet. c. 34.

Plutar. de ſuperſtit.

humane nature, yet experience of their own infirmity, at other times extorted this confession from them, that a *divine impulse* was necessary to make a Man truly great and good; and that there is *something divine in holy men, that informs and guides them.* Which differs but little from that of St. *John*, 1 Ep. c. 2. 20. *Ye have an unction from the holy one, and know all things.* But the knowledge of their remedy, was not equal to the sense and pressure of their Disease: they could cry out with St. *Paul*, *Oh wretched Man that I am! who shall deliver me?* but could not answer with him, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Nunquam vir magnus sine divino afflatu. Cicero.

Θεῖον γένος Βροτοῖσιν, οἷς ἱερὰ προφέρουσα φύσις δείκνυσιν ἕκαστα. Pythag. Aur. Carm.

It is the Redeemer of the World, who by a divine strength hath relieved the weakness of Man; and *by the law of the spirit of life, made them free from the law of sin and death.* The Sun of Righteousness, just before his rising upon the benighted World, had emitted some twilight Rayes into the darkness of it; by

Rom. 8. 3.

raiſing up ſome eminent Philoſophers, (Preachers of Righteouſneſs) to check the ſuperſtition and madneſs of the Prieſts: and to ſcatter ſome rayes of knowledge among the people, thereby to prepare the way to the Eternal Word, who was to bring with him the treaſures of divine Knowledge and Wiſdom. But when this glorious Sun was riſen, he not only ſhed a divine light, but quickening heat and influence upon the benummed and frozen World. He revived the dead, reſtored the languiſhing, redeem'd the Captive, and enabled Slaves to break off their
Joh. 8. 36. Fetters: and thoſe whom the Eternal Truth ſet at liberty, were *free indeed.* He plentifully poured out that Spirit that reſted on himſelf;
Iſa. 11. 2. *even the Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, of counſel and might, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.* By the miraculous effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, he awaken'd the ſtupid World, and called them into his Church, an unconquerable never-failing

failing Principle of Eternal Righteouſneſs. By the *abounding of this grace* he hath provided, that (as ſin hath reigned unto death, ſo) *righteouſneſs* may now *reign* unto Eternal Life. The Goſpel preached in the *demonſtration of the Spirit*, made a ſpeedy and wonderful reformation, in the underſtandings, tempers, and lives of Men; and yielded a moſt powerful conviction, that God was both able and willing to reſtore his loſt Image in them. And all the treaſures of this divine Spirit, are promiſed to thoſe that humbly ask, and are willing to receive them. The Conſcience therefore awakened by the light of Truth, is no longer amazed or diſtracted; but confiding in the divine aids, and ſtrengthened with his Heavenly Grace, purſues its conflict with the Fleſh to a compleat Victory. Every good motion is from the ſame Spirit of Truth and Grace, which hath made ſuch admirable Conqueſts over Ignorance and Luſt; and he that hath the ſame Principle

Rom. 5. 21.

Principle in himſelf, can't but have a good hope of the ſame bleſſed Fruits. The Soul that feels a divine ſtrength, cannot but expect from the ſame Fountain, a conſtant ſupply; and thus united to God in the ſame deſign of reſtoring his Image, and animated with the holy Spirit, can't fail to maſter all oppoſition; *for greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World.*

This therefore is the Foundation, on which Chriſts Kingdom of Righteouſneſs and Grace is built; *viz.* Faith eſtabliſhing the heart, by a full and certain perſwaſion of theſe Fundamental Points, *viz.*

That, God is Reconciled, and Pardon and gracious acceptance ſure to returning Sinners.

That, a future Judgment and Eternal Life, and conſequently the difference of moral good and evil, are indiſputably certain; and unqueſtionable realities.

That, there is but one God, the Creator of all things, and Father of our

our Lord Jesus Christ; the only object of worship, and Fountain of Blessing: whom we must glorify in, and worship through, as he blesseth us by the Eternal Word, and Spirit.

That, the true service of God consists in the imitation of him, of which the Life of Jesus is our Pattern; that such Holiness is indispensibly necessary, certainly practicable, and can never fail of the divine acceptance.

That, the corruption of nature, and the power of inclination and custom, are infallibly conquerable by the grace of God; and God most ready to prevent, and follow us with his grace; and that he will never fail to assist and prosper our endeavours, till they are crowned with Everlasting Success.

This is *the Gospel*; upon these *fundamentals* of religious Belief, must the Superstructure of Holiness and Happiness be raised and built. Now Christians even of the meanest Capacities, believing Jesus to be the Son of God, and receiving that account the

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

the Evangelists give of him, have thereby most evident demonstration, lively persuasion, and certain knowledge of these fundamental truths: such as the most learned Philosophers could not attain unto; and the generality of the World were extreamly far from.

This Foundation being laid sure, God having made Faith of these truths to all men in a most easy and certain way, and most powerfully and solemnly attested them, by the miraculous effusion and demonstration of the Spirit; that which remains for restoring Religion and Man, for perfecting the Kingdom of Christ; is, to build upon this holy Faith, the true Image of God, and Spirit of Holiness: to pluck up those prejudices that debauched Mens minds, the Sources and Tap-roots of false Religion; and to inculcate those truths which contain the true *Spirit* and *Genius* of pure and undefil'd Religion. With this design the Doctrine and Life of Jesus travail,

viz.

viz. to introduce amongſt his Followers, that excellency of Spirit, that was in himſelf; which is the true *Image* of God, the glory and the *perfection* of Man. And as this ſpirit obtains, ſo his Kingdom comes with effect; and when it ſhall reſt univerſally upon his Followers, then *ſhall come ſalvation and ſtrength, the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt*: for the *Kingdoms of the World ſhall become his; and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.* This is the Summ and Accompliſhment of all theſe glorious Prophecies concerning the Kingdom of the Meſſiah; *That the Knowledge of the Lord ſhall fill the Earth, as the Waters cover the ſea*, Iſa. 11. 4. Rev. 12. 10. c. 11. 15.

The plentiful effuſion of this ſpirit upon the primitive Chriſtians, made them hope for the ſpeedy accompliſhment of theſe Predictions; and ſpeak of the perfection of Chriſt's Kingdom as near at hand. But ſo great a Reformation was a work of time, and Chriſt had foretold, not only

only a failing of the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, but a reviving of the Kingdom of darkneſs; an Apoſtaſie from the Faith, ſuch a return of the ejected prejudices, and depravation of Religion, as ſhould undermine the very *Foundations*; and ſubject men again to the ignorant infidelity, anxious Superſtition, abominable Idolatry, and fooliſh Luſts of the benighted Pagans. But that himſelf in due time, will again ſet up his Kingdom, and reſtore to his Followers, the *ſpirit of power, of love, and a ſound mind*; make truth, righteouſneſs and peace to reign, and ſo break the Empire of Satan, that he ſhall never be able to erect it more. In the mean while he hath left with us his Heavenly Doctrine and holy Life, as an Antidote againſt thoſe deluſions, which are the paſſages to, and the very Sinews and Strength of Satan's Kingdom, whether Pagan or Antichriſtian: and powerfully to inculcate the contrary truths, which conſtitute the genuine Spirit of Chriſtianity,

1 Tim. 4. 1, &c.

2 Tim. 1. 7.

anity, building men up into the Image of God, and into the Glorious Kingdom of his Son Jeſus Chriſt.

Firſt, Senſuality and the Love of Sin, is the inlet of errour, the root and ſap of falſe Religion; but Purity and the *Love* of Righteouſneſs, inculcated in the Doctrine and Life of Jeſus, is the Friend of Truth and Wiſdom, and the way to be filled with the knowledge of God. They who love their Luſts, cannot love the truth that is contrary to them; nor endure the light that diſcovers their vile deformities. An impure mind is unmeet to receive the knowledge of a pure and holy God; and a guilty mind cannot bear it. The effect of ſuch knowledge upon impure ſpirits is dread; and that quickly converts into Superſtition. For a guilty Conſcience (like a drowning man that catches hold of every twig) embraces every expedient offered, to compound with an offended God; and will do any thing to pleaſe, ſave only the rendring that holy

holy obedience that he requires of him. If atonement may be made by Sacrifice, the Altars ſhall flame and ſmoke continually; their Flocks and Herds be all devoted, they will make, if poſſible, Rivers of Oyl to run from the Sacrifices: yea they will not ſpare their own Bowels; Mich. 6. 6. but give the fruit of their body, an expiation for the ſin of their Soul. They will not fail to build Temples and adorn Shrines, nor to viſit them devoutly; nor think much of a coſtly and painful devotion; if they may have but hope to ſatisfy God for the arrears they are in to his Juſtice. And when they have labour'd it hard, they begin to hope it may do; and that God will ſurely be pleas'd that they have done ſo much 2 Theſſ. 2. 11. to gain his favour. And juſt it is with God, to ſend them *ſtrong deluſion*, and give them over to the *belief of lies*; who loved not the truth, nor were obedient to it. But the Spirit of Obedience, is the Spirit of Children; to be followers of God makes

makes us dear to him; and the doers of his will ſhall know the Doctrine: this is the Leſſon which Chriſt inculcates. A pure mind hath a lively perception of truth; is very apprehenſive of Errours, diſhonourable to God, and that deface his Image: and ſuch purity it is, that the Doctrine and Life of Jeſus travel to produce; all Knowledge is of no further value than as miniſtring to, proceeding from, or accompanied with it. All the *Sacrifices of the wicked* are declared *an abomination*, but the delight of God, is in thoſe that love him, and do his Commandments; for they ſhall be loved of God; *he will manifeſt himſelf unto, and make his abode with them.* Joh. 14. 21, 22, 23.

Secondly, Senſe and Imagination, Fondneſs for external ſhew and pomp, is the way of Superſtition, and falſe Religion: but the love of ſpiritual worſhip, and a rational ſervice, is the ſpirit of Chriſt, and that way of his Kingdom. God is a *Spirit*, and chiefly to be worſhipped

with ours. And although, ſo long as we are cloathed with Fleſh, our Religion muſt have a *Body* as well as *Soul*; yet by an uninſtructed fondneſs for the Bodily part, Men have ever departed from God, into dotage and ſuperſtition; and rendred themſelves a prey to the powers of darkneſs.

This is the miſtake of the vulgar eſpecially, or of Souls as mean and unimproved as theirs, though hang'd with better trappings. By this fondneſs for repreſentation, pomp and ſolemnity, the Patriarchal Rites which were few and grave, grew up at length into a theatrical and magnificent Religion; that required a great Miniſtry, and a huge body of Rubricks for the exact performance of it. For now the height and magnitude, and ſhape of the Altar, the number of its ſteps, and horns, and innumerable things of like ſort, entred into Religion; and exerciſed the ſervile Superſtition of the Worſhipper.

At

At this door came in Images, with all their train of Foppiſh and Idolatrous Ceremonies; and became *ſtumbling blocks to the ſouls of men, and ſnares to the feet of the unwiſe; the ſingular diligence of the Artificer helping forward the ignorant to more ſuperſtition. This deviſing of Idols was the beginning of ſpiritual Fornication; the invention of them the corruption of life. Wiſd.* 14. The proneneſs of the Jews to revolt unto the way of the Heathen, the fondneſs of thoſe that became Chriſtians for their old Rites, whether of Paganiſm, or Judaiſm, the great multitude of theſe early obtaining in the Chriſtian Church, together with the neceſſity that the Apoſtles and firſt Reformers found of indulging for a time the accuſtomed Rites and Ceremonies; theſe are convincing demonſtrations of the power of this Childiſh fondneſs, for ſomewhat ſenſible and pompous in Religion; and of the danger of falling into falſe Religion, by multiplying Rites to the ſubverting of ſpiri-

tual worſhip, or laying the ſtreſs of Religion on ſuch bodily ſervice.

But Chriſtianity teacheth a ſpiritual worſhip, and rational ſervice; *viz.* that of the Mind illuminated with true Knowledge, and quickned with a lively ſenſe of God, and referring all unto him. And the very bodily part is either the *ſpiritual* Sacrifice of Prayer and Praiſe; or the Miniſtry of the Word and Sacraments for ſpiritual ends and purpoſes; for the help of Faith, Devotion and Reſolution, and the more effectual uniting the heart unto God in fervent love, in thankful and dutiful affection. *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; for he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, is accepted of God, and approved of men.* But he that has a mighty opinion of bodily labour, that values a Ceremony before a Vertue, his opinion about a Rite before Charity or Peace, that acts his fancy more than his underſtanding; is more nice and curious

Rom. 14. 17.

rious about the bodily than the ſpiritual part of worſhip; ſuch an one is departed from the genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, entred in at the gate of Superſtition, in danger of all the extravagance and dotage thereof, and thereby of Apoſtatizing into the Kingdom of darkneſs.

Thirdly, A dark and ſervile dread of God, is the temper and ſpirit of falſe Religion; but the Spirit of Chriſtianity is *light and love, and a ſound mind.* When Men become alienated from God by wicked works, and ſerve him chiefly with their vain imaginations, then they loſe the true and amiable notion of him; they *conſider him only as terrible and dreadful, who is the ſupream good, and only happineſs of his creatures.* They conceive of him altogether as *arbitrary power*, who is Eternal *mind and wiſdom*, and the glory and perfection of whoſe nature it is, that as he can do whatever he will, ſo he can will nothing but what is wiſe and good. The Dreams of ſuch dark and timo-

2 Tim. 1. 7.

φοβερὸν καὶ τερατῶδες, Plutarc. de ſuperſt.

rous minds, are very frightful, wild and extravagant; they worſhip the Idol of their own brains, expreſs their own ill nature, and diſturbed imaginations, in that worſhip, which ſhould be a confeſſion of the excellency and perfection of the Deity. Hence Men came to place Religion in ſolemn darkneſs, in cloud and myſtery, venerable becauſe hidden or unintelligible Rites, obſcure Oracles, ſacred Paradoxes, and Arks and Clefts full of divine and wonderful ſecrets: of which the Prieſt and the Devil taking advantage, made themſelves abſolute Maſters of the belief and reverence of the people, and by theſe of their Eſtates and Fortunes. But this is the Meſſage which we have heard of Chriſt, *that God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.* That the Principles of his Service are Knowledge and Love; and he regards not the Religion of thoſe that worſhip they know not what, nor why. That we direct our Service and Obedience, by what we clearly know

1 Joh. 1. 5.

know of him; and that the more we know, the better we ſhall pleaſe him; who will not be ſerved with a blind ſubmiſſion, nor with unintelligible myſteries, but with our beſt underſtanding; not with a ſervile Flattery, and Court-like Addreſs, by many Interceſſors, with a ritual niceneſs, or a pompous Pageantry, or any ſuch devices of ignorant and ſuperſtitious Minds; but with purity of Heart and Life, with a ſpirit of Love, and of a ſound Mind; not with Terrour and Melancholy, but with Hope and Alliance; not with ſcruple and perplexity, but generous Reſolution; not as an Arbitrary Tyrant, but as a wiſe and loving Father.

Fourthly, The Devil is *the God of this World*; and the Spirit of errour is an earthly and ſecular one, but the Kingdom of Chriſt is *Heavenly*; and ſuch is the ſpirit and genius of his Religion. The love of the World, and an inordinate eſtimate of the goods thereof, was ever a mighty

ſource of Superſtition, and Pillar of Satan's Empire. With ſuch Worldly-minded Men Intereſt is always more ponderous than Truth; and that Religion beſt that moſt effectually provides for their temporal concerns. To ſuch ſecular Spirits, 'twas a very agreeable conceit, to imagine, that every buſineſs of theirs was under the eſpecial care of ſome *Patron* Deity; whoſe Rites, if they carefully performed their affairs, ſhould ſucceed according to their wiſh. The multitude of ſuch Tutelar Gods, for Cities, Families, and particular affairs, the ſuperſtitious regard to Oracles and Prodigies, the obſervation of times, and all the Arts of divination and augury, which made up the Pagan Superſtition, plainly ſhew the ſpirit of its Votaries: *viz.* that their hopes and fortunes were Embarqued in this World, and that they regarded the good and evil thereof, as the ſole reward of their labour, or puniſhment of their negligence in Religion. This principle the Idolatrous

latrous Jews plainly avowed to the Prophets Head, (when he expoſtulated with them concerning their forſaking of God, *Jer.* 44. 17.) that they would burn Incenſe to, and ſerve the Queen of Heaven as their Fathers had done to good purpoſe; for *then they had plenty, and ſaw no evil*; whereas ſince they had left off their ſervice, all things had gone to ruin. Nor was this a vulgar conceit, but the beſt defence the greateſt Men among the Pagans could make for the worſhip of thoſe *many Lords*; that by their *ſingular care the good things of life are diſtributed to men*: ſo *Cæcilius*, *Celſus*, and the Emperour *Julian* defend the Cauſe of Dæmon-worſhip.

Cæcilius in Minut. Felic. Orig. c. Celſ. l. 8. Jul. Ep. 51.

It is alſo a mighty temptation unto Men, to imagine that God muſt needs love ſuch Riches, Magnificence and Glory in his Service, as they find themſelves to be extreamly delighted withal; that the long flouriſhing of a Religion is a demonſtration of the truth of it, and the misfortune

misfortune and calamity of Men, an argument againſt their way of ſerving God. Thus they are apt to conclude, who mind Earthly things, and over-rate the concerns of this Life, and judge every petit affair thereof worthy of a divine deciſion.

But Chriſtianity teacheth us to conſider our ſelves as Strangers and Pilgrims here; whoſe eſtate and intereſt doth not lye in ſublunary things, but in ſpiritual Promiſes, and Immortal Hopes. We are Citizens of Heaven, and only travelling through this World thither. Upon this our Heavenly Relation and Intereſt only, we may value our ſelves; and ought to love our Religion becauſe it ſecures theſe to us, and deſigns the improvement of our Spirits for the eternal Viſion and Enjoyment of God. We are inſtructed therefore to have our affections very moderate and cool towards Earthly things, but warm and tender towards Heavenly Objects. This is the

the finiſhing Leſſon, and moſt excellent effect of the Chriſtian Religion; which is a Heavenly Philoſophy: and to make it truckle to the affairs of this Life, or turn it into Maxims of ſecular Policy, is the greateſt abuſe and ſubverſion thereof.

Laſtly, The ſpirit and genius of falſe Religion, is ſelfiſh, narrow and ſtingy; but that of Chriſtianity, Charitable, and generous and large, as the Kingdom and goodneſs of God.

Superſtition converts Religion into a private Commerce; imagining God to gain by the ſervice done him, and expecting the return of that ſervice only in perſonal and private Bleſſings. And no wonder if they who conceive God to ſeek himſelf in the homage he exacts from his Creatures, imitate the Deity they worſhip; and centre in themſelves in every thing they do: or that they who ſerve an arbitrary Deity, ſhould expect to oblige and render him partial to their intereſt, by the multi-

tude

tude of their ſervices. Hence aroſe the conceit, that the divine favour and beneficence might be monopolized by certain perſons, was appropriated to particular places; or annexed to the performance of peculiar Rites: and happy they, that had the ſecret of that Monopoly, the myſtery of engroſſing the divine protection and care. Hence every Family had its tutelar Gods and ſingular Rites, and they changed the Shrine, the Rite, or the place, when any ill ſucceſs defeated their expectation. So *Balaak* repeated the Sacrifice, and ſhifted the place, in hopes at laſt to make the God he ſupplicated favourable to his requeſt, *Numb.* 23. 13. He ſaid unto *Balaam*, Come I pray thee with me unto *another place*; and Curſe me them *from thence*. So the *Syrians* having fought unſucceſsfully with the *Iſraelites* upon the Hills, reſolve to change the place, and to have recourſe to the Gods of the Vallies, in hopes of better ſucceſs, 1 *Kings* 20. 23. *Their Gods*

Fugiuntq; penates quiſq; ſuos, ſua cuiq; domus funeſta videtur, & quia cauſa latet, locus eſt in crimine notus. Ovid. Met. l. 7.

Gods are Gods of the Hills, therefore they were ſtronger than we; but let us fight againſt them in the plain, and ſurely we ſhall be ſtronger than they.

Hence ſuch who found, by ſucceſs, that their intereſt in their Gods was great, boaſted this reward of their Superſtition, and trampled upon ſuch who ſeem'd neglected of the Deity, or greatly fallen from his favour and protection. Whom God had forſaken (either for their neglects of his ſervice, or for the arbitrarineſs of his own will, caſting them out of his protection) they look'd upon as abandoned to neglect and contempt, and cruel treatments. If kindneſs were due to any, it was only to thoſe whom God diſtinguiſhed by his Favours, or who ſerved him in the ſame manner with themſelves; and that kindneſs too was arbitrary and precarious as well as partial, and ever gave place to the efforts of a narrow, ſtingy, and ſelfiſh Spirit. Hence alſo the Spirit of Perſecution became an ingredient of falſe

falſe Religion, the Friends and Favourites of God (as they thought themſelves) conceited they did him ſervice in deſtroying his *Enemies*; or at leaſt, that they had right to uſe as they pleaſed, to cruſh and ruin thoſe deſpicable Wretches, who were reprobated and *out-law'd*, and fallen from the protection and care of Heaven.

But Chriſtianity teacheth us to ſerve God, not as if he needed ſuch ſervice, but for the reaſonableneſs and excellency thereof; becauſe his ſervice is perfect freedom, and true Religion the perfection of Man. It teacheth us to ſeek our improvement and happineſs in ſubjection to thoſe laws of God, which are the tranſcript of his moſt perfect and bleſſed nature, and are deſign'd for the perfecting and felicitating ours; and contains in them the true Elements, the certain principles and neceſſary means of ſuch felicity. It teacheth us to conſider God, not as a reſpecter of perſons, but as *God both of the*

Jews

Jews and Gentiles; the univerſal Father of the whole Family of Heaven and Earth, governing by the eternal meaſures of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and by Laws that reſpect and provide for the welfare of the whole: As the inexhauſtible Fountain of Goodneſs, ever communicating himſelf to all his Creatures, according to their Capacities; and requiring only ſuch ſervice as capacitates for the enjoyment of him. It directeth us to ſeek the glory of God, not in the triumphs of his Arbitrary Power, but in the conſummate effects of his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; the perfection of his works, and eſpecially of that grace he hath beſtowed on Men; in the moſt perfect communication of himſelfto them, which is life and happineſs everlaſting.

And as our God, ſo our Religion is love; Charity is the ſumm and ſubſtance of it, generous goodneſs, the moſt courteous gentleneſs, the moſt perfect humanity, the trueſt greatneſs of Mind, and largeneſs of Heart,

Heart, are the genuine and excellent fruits thereof. It obligeth us to conſider our ſelves but as ſtones in the great building of God, diſpoſed by the wiſdom of the Almighty Architect, with regard to the whole Fabrick; and that we become uſeleſs and inſignificant, by centring in our ſelves, and minding only our own things, without reſpect had to the common intereſt. Juſt as the *members of the body* are beautiful in conjunction, and conſiderable in their operations, conſpiring to the common welfare: for the Eye doth not ſee for it ſelf, but looks out for the whole Body; and the hand is uſeleſs whilſt it graſps to it ſelf, but its miniſtrations to the Body are neceſſary and excellent. It obligeth us to account all the gifts of God, as deſigned to render us uſeful to others; not to make us glad and full of our ſelves. In ſhort the whole œconomy of the Goſpel, travels with this deſign, to better the Societies of Men, and perfect the Communion of Saints;

Rom. 12. 3, 4, 5.

to

to edify the Body of Chriſt in the Spirit of Love, ruling in all its Members, to render Believers of one Heart and one Soul, as their God, their Faith, and their Hope, their Profeſſion, Buſineſs and Intereſt are one; that they may be one as the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, by a Communication of the ſame excellent nature and communion in the ſame divine riches and treaſures. And the Chriſtian thus inſtructed values himſelf, and expects his approbation from God, not by his enjoyments, but by his uſefulneſs; not by the number of his talents, but by the improvement he makes of them.

This is the true ſpirit of Chriſt's Religion and excellent proceed of his Kingdom; the true Members whereof being by a right and lively Faith fixed upon a ſolid Foundation, firmly perſwaded of the mercy of God, and of Eternal Life, of the neceſſity of Holineſs, and the efficacy of the divine Aſſiſtance, are built upon this Faith into a moſt excellent

temper; inform'd and govern'd by the ſpirit of ſincerity and purity, delighting in the ſpiritual worſhip of God, united to him in filial truſt and affection, placing their Happineſs, and ſeeking their Intereſt not in the things of this World, but thoſe of a better, purſuing them with tender and warm affections, having their ſpirits enlarged by the knowledge of God, and fill'd with generous goodneſs in imitation of the divine beneficence, do ſeek their own felicity in the perfection and conſummation of the Kingdom of God. For the effecting hereof, Chriſt hath left with us the Record of his Doctrine and Life; that we *beholding therein the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the ſame Image, from glory to glory, by the ſpirit of the Lord.*

2 Cor. 3. 18.

To miniſter hereunto is this Tract deſigned. Firſt, By exhibiting the true Principles of Chriſtian Doctrine, levelled againſt the moſt pernicious errours, and reſtoring true Religion, as

as they are contain'd in the Sermons and occaſional Diſcourſes of Jeſus, recorded by the Evangeliſts: and by conſidering how Jeſus inculcated and abetted this holy truth, as a pattern to us, how we ſhould hold, and profeſs, and propugne ſuch his Doctrine. Secondly, By exhibiting the true ſpirit and genius of the Chriſtian Life and Practice, collected from the Example of Jeſus. And that firſt, By drawing the great lines of his Life, as the admirable pattern of ours. Secondly, By applying the light of this Example for our Inſtruction, in the neceſſity, nature, extent and excellency of true holineſs. Thirdly, By ſhewing what obligation and encouragement the Life of Chriſt contains, to render us followers of him; concluding with an Exhortation to that purpoſe.

THE PATTERN Of Pure and Undefiled RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Containing the Principles of Christian Doctrine.

JEsus being a *Teacher sent from God*, Sect. 1.
to restore true Religion, levell'd his Doctrine principally against those Errours contrary thereunto, which yet Mankind was very prone to fall into; and inculcated those prime and fundamental truths, which make up the genuine Spirit, constitute the Essence, and are (as it were)

the *Informing Soul* of true and undefil'd Religion. As,

First, Concerning the Nature and Government of God. *He that lay in* Joh. 1.18. *the bosome of the father, hath reveal'd him to us.* Whom Men rather conceived of, as a powerful, than as a good Being; a God of wrath, and the object of their dread, rather than a God of perfect Wisdom and Goodness, the object of their love and holy imitation: One whom they might possibly appease by Gifts, and atone by servile performances; little apprehending in the mean while, that He was most easy to reconcile, and forward to do them good, and sufficiently pleased if they were but willing to be made happy by him.

This was the degenerate and *misshapen notion* of God, that inform'd the Religion of the World, and render'd it servile, superstitious, unsavoury, and uncomfortable. As for the Jews, God was their King, and they consider'd him as the Lord of their Hosts; dreading his Power, and limiting

limiting his goodneſs. Whilſt they reverenc'd his Sanctuary, hallow'd his Sabbaths, and paid his tyth and oblations, they were ſafe under his Almighty Protection; and to them poſſibly he might make ſome allowance, and bear with the tranſgreſſions of his peculiar people: but the Nations of the World they look'd upon as the people of his Wrath, and either devoted to deſtruction, or not regarded by him; who, whatever goodneſs he had in his nature, had appropriated that to the Jews only. Jeſus therefore *who hath ſhew'd us plainly of the Father*, inculcates worthy apprehenſions of God; teaching us to conceive of him, as the Father of Mercies, as kind to the unthankful, and freely good towards all; and that Univerſal Love, the moſt generous and fervent Charity, the moſt tender Bowels of Pity, theſe are his true Image, and make us like God, *the children of our Father which is in Heaven*, Math. 5. 44. He therefore tells the Jews, that God loved not

them only, but *the whole World*; and that to ſuch degree, as he ſent his only Son into it, for the Salvation of all, that ſhould become willing to be ſaved by him, *Joh.* 3. 16. That He came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt; and that Repentance and remiſſion of Sins, ſhould be preach'd in his Name, to All People without exception, *Luk.* 24. 47. that God is gracious and reconcileable in his nature, and that there is *Joy in Heaven at the converſion of a ſinner*, Luk. 15. 7, 10. In a word, the true notion of God is, that he is indeed to be Reverenc'd for his excellent Greatneſs, but that he is eſpecially to be loved for his Goodneſs, as being the excellent pattern of all that is good, and original of all perfection, whom to know is Life Eternal; to be like him is to be as perfect as we are capable, and to ſee God our ſupream felicity; and that Viſion is the portion of his Children, that ſtrive to imitate the Being they Adore and Love, that Copy out his Purity, his Righteouſneſs,

neſs, and Mercy; they ſhall *be bleſſed, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. ſuch are the excellent notions of God, which the Doctrine of Chriſt inſpires, baniſhing thoſe narrow and ſtingy, mean and ſervile conceptions of him, that had infected the minds, and vitiated the Religion of Jews and Gentiles, and which Mankind are exceeding prone to fall into.

Secondly, Jeſus in his preaching, Sect. 2. did eſpecially inculcate the truth of divine Worſhip, with what things God is pleas'd, and what is the Worſhip and Homage he requires of us; diſpelling the groſs Ignorance, and dangerous Errours, both of the Jews and Gentiles.

God he tells them is a Spirit, and will be worſhipped in ſpirit and truth, with the Mind and Soul, without ſhadows and ceremonies, *Joh.* 4. 23. as he will not be honour'd with Images, ſo he little regardeth any external performances. That he values neither place nor time, but every where, and at all times, he will have

have Men call upon him, holding up pure hands, with ſincere and fervent minds. That he preferreth Mercy to Sacrifice; and is only *glorify'd by our being fruitful in good works*, Joh. 15. 8. that the Gentile Image-worſhip was abominable, and the Jews Ceremonies trifles, and the Phariſaick ſuperſtition intolerable with God. To turn Religion into noiſe and ſhew, to place it in Fringes and Phylacteries, in diſtinguiſhing opinions, or unprofitable ſpeculations, in regard to Altars and Shrines, to difference of meats and days, and ſuch like Traditions of Men; this was an offence and ſcandal that moved the Spirit, the meek and gentle Jeſus, and made him reprove ſharply, and laſh ſeverely, the abetters of it, *Math.* 23. Eſpecially they having advanced theſe trifles and ſuperſtitions, into the place of *Juſtice*, *Mercy* and *Faith*, and the *greater things of the Law, and made void the Commandments of God through their traditions.*

There is nothing (our Saviour tells us)

us) entring into the Man that can defile him in the eſtimate of God, *but the evil things that proceed out of the heart, theſe defile the man*, Mark 7. 18. nor can any thing on the other hand avail him, but what proceeds from a mind full of God, and is a *genuine fruit* of the true knowledge of him. That true Religion and true Happineſs (*its natural iſſue*) conſiſt in, and are the reſults of a due temper of mind; the poor in ſpirit, the penitent Mourners, the meek, the merciful, the pure, and peaceable; theſe are the true Worſhippers, and truly happy Men. That God needeth not our Prayers to inform him of our wants, or to move his pity; nor are we heard the ſooner for our much ſpeaking, but that our due apprehenſions concerning God, and humble confidence in him, fervent application of our Soul towards him, and a ready obſequiouſneſs to his Will, theſe render us capable of his Bleſſings, and ſecure them to us. When our hearts are full of the ſenſe Math. 5. 3, &c.

of

of his power and goodneſs, and our Prayers oblige us to honour him in our Lives; when we forgive others as heartily as we deſire God to forgive us, and pray to our Father in ſecret, with a full truſt to be heard and approved by him; then we worſhip him aright, and ſhall be the better for ſuch our ſerving God, though he that is infinitely perfect needs not our Service, nor can be profited by us, *Matth. 6.*

Jeſus inſtructs us therefore to make our Prayers ſhort and grave, fervent and apt to excite Devotion, after the Pattern he taught his Diſciples, *Mat. 6. 9.* And that we pray continually and importunately, for thoſe things the deſire whereof doth greatly exalt and improve our Spirits, *Luk.* 11. 1, 13. thus did this great Inſtructer call Men back to the true worſhip of God, admoniſhing that they no longer ſhould truſt in Sacrifices and oblations, in pompous Rites, and ceremonious Addreſſes, or any thing of that nature; but worſhip God in Spirit

rit and Truth, and be *followers of him as dear Children*, and then they might rely upon it, that their Heavenly Father both knows their needs, and will moſt readily ſuccour them in all their diſtreſs, and beſtow upon them *all his goods.*

Thirdly, Another main Principle of true Religion, taught by the holy Jeſus, concerns the true motive, reaſon and end of our duty and obedience, in which Mankind had groſly miſconceiv'd and miſtaken; and ſuch miſtake is moſt fatal and pernicious to Religion, and to that ſatisfaction and happineſs that ſhould be attain'd by it. The Pagans ploy'd their Altars, and practiſed their Religion, to avert a Peſtilence or Famine, to obtain the *Commodities of Life.* The Jews would not ſerve God for nought, but were encouraged to expect affluence and proſperity as the reward of their Obedience. The wicked Phariſees had prevaricated to the utmoſt, and preſumed they might ſatisfy for Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, Sect. 3.

preſſion, by a ſtrict obſervation of the Ceremonies of the Law, and Traditions of the Elders. The people generally expected from Chriſt ſecular Immunities and Priviledges, *they followed him for the Loaves.* Their Fathers (they tell him) did eat Manna, were wonderfully fed and protected in the Wilderneſs, and planted at length in a land flowing with Milk and Honey, but what ſign ſheweſt thou? *Joh.* 6. 30, 31. Upon which, and all apt occaſions, Jeſus inſtructs them in the true reaſons, motives and ends of obedience to God, telling them, that to make Religion a Cloak to ſecular deſigns, is to proſtitute and profane it; and to procure to themſelves an inevitable and great damnation, *Matth.* 23. 14. That they ſhould not ſeek any longer the *meat which periſheth, but that which endureth to eternal Life*, Joh. 6. 27. That his Kingdom was not of this World, nor did he promiſe his Followers extraordinary immunities in it: but rather it would frequently ſo happen, that

that they ſhould be hated, reviled, and perſecuted for their adherence to him. There is indeed a true and great felicity, the natural reſult, and inſeparable conſequent of the righteouſneſs taught by Chriſt, but then poverty of Spirit, and contempt of the world, are parts of that Righteouſneſs, and Ingredients of that Bleſſedneſs; and being revil'd, diſgraced, afflicted, and perſecuted, are well enough conſiſtent with it. *Bleſſed are they that ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, and their reward ſhall be great in Heaven.* That his Diſciples muſt take up the Croſs; and no Man can be his Diſciple, that is not reſolved to part with all for his ſake, *Luk.* 14. 33. and the hundred fold reſtitution that he promiſeth, is ſuch as conſiſts with perſecution, *Mar.* 10. 30. That therefore his Diſciples ought not to have the intereſts of this World in mighty Reckoning; nor value themſelves upon any thing, beſides their intereſt in the future and better Life. Nay even

Math. 5. Mark 7. 34.

even thoſe miraculous gifts they were endowed withal, far exceeding all the gifts of Nature, or of Fortune, yet were not a ſufficient foundation for any great complacency, or rejoycing in themſelves; *Luke* 10. 20. *Rejoice not in this that the ſpirits are ſubject to you, but rather rejoice becauſe your names are written in Heaven.* His Promiſe to his Followers is, that he will Raiſe them up at the laſt day, that where he is they ſhall be alſo, that they ſhall have *a beatifical Viſion* of God in Life Everlaſting; that in the mean while, they ſhall be the Children of God, and have the lively hope of his Favour, the Conſcience of their own Integrity, the feeling of a happy temper and excellent ſtate of mind, and the conſolations of the Holy Spirit for their ſupport and encouragement. Upon theſe motives, and from the principles of equity and ingenuity, love and gratitude to God, and a deſire of being like him, and of attaining that perfection they are capable of, he wills them to practiſe

all

all Righteouſneſs, he recommends their duty to them. And this is it which conſtitutes the *Spirit and Soul* of Chriſtian Righteouſneſs, and gives the true *ſtamp and complexion* to all our Obedience, *viz.* that it being founded in a right knowledge of God, cheriſhed by a holy Acquaintance with him, expreſſed in thoſe things that are Worthy of him; making a due difference between the *greater and leſſer matters of the law*; be acted from love and gratitude, from a conviction of the excellency of Holineſs, and with *delight* in it, from the hope and deſire of *Eternal Life*, and a full perſwaſion of the neceſſity of holineſs to perfect our nature, and make us capable of *ſeeing God*, and meet to enjoy him. This is the Truth as Jeſus taught it; which he that heartily imbibes, and ſuitably expreſſeth in his Life, he is a Chriſtian, a Diſciple indeed, and ſhall receive the *end of his Faith, the Salvation of his Soul.*

Laſtly, The Doctrine of Jeſus hath alſo given Light, to the Meaſure of Sect. 4.

Righteouſneſs, and extent of our duty, with reſpect to ſome allowances made to the Jews, or ſuch things as God winked at in former times of Ignorance. For we are aſſured by him, that *unleſs our righteouſneſs exceeds the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, we ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of God*, Math. 5. 20. That not only murther and maiming, but hatred and revenge, yea *cauſeleſs and immoderate anger* will certainly expoſe us to the judgment of God. That *ineffectual Luſt* makes us guilty before him, as well as actual Adultery. That the occaſions of evil muſt be avoided, and the firſt motions of Luſt repelled, or we periſh by our indulgence, fondneſs and ſoftneſs, as well as by accompliſh'd wickedneſs. That although God tolerated the hard-hearted Jews, and winked at the ignorant Gentiles, in the matter of Polygamy and Divorce, yet from the beginning it was not ſo: nor ſhould be for the future among the Diſciples of Jeſus. That trivial

trivial and common ſwearing makes guilty as well as Perjury; but ſuch truth and faithfulneſs ought to be amongſt Chriſtians, that their credit might not need the ſupport of an Oath. This is the ſubſtance of our Saviour's Sermon, in *Matth.* 5.20. to the 37 *verſe.* Farther he enjoins, that his Diſciples ſhould excel in meekneſs, and patient bearing of injuries, not reſiſting evil, but over-coming it with good. That they ſhould not violently impoſe their Religion on Men, nor yet endeavour the deſtruction of ſuch as with violence oppoſed it. To call for Fire from Heaven on the Churches Enemies; to kill extrajudicially, a bold Seducer of the Brethren from true Religion, were acts of holy zeal, once commended and rewarded; but Chriſtians are required to be of *another ſpirit, Luke* 9. 55. *And the ſon of man came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them.* He calls his Followers to the moſt excellent heights of all vertue, that they may ſhine as Lights

before Men, and become *as the ſalt of the earth* to ſeaſon the manners of others, and keep them from *ſtinking corruption.* So that whereever his Religion ſhould come, it ſhould produce many *eminent lights*, and incomparable Examples; and ſhould have ſuch a general influence, as to render the Converſations of all more tolerable and ſavoury.

Such is the inſtruction contain'd in the preaching of Jeſus, exhibiting to us the true Principles of Chriſtian Religion, declaring the *genuine ſpirit and temper* of it. He moreover aſſerted his own Authority and Miſſion from God to reſtore his true Religion and Worſhip; he confirm'd the former Revelations, and taught a juſt Reverence of them; he reveal'd many things concerning the following ſtate of his Church, and promiſed farther information in thoſe matters by the pouring out of his Spirit upon it. But theſe are things foreign to our preſent buſineſs. I ſhall therefore here ſhut up the firſt Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The manner of Christ's teaching, instructive to us, how we ought to profess, abett and maintain his Doctrine.

JEsus the great Prophet that was to come into the World, did by his Preaching Inlighten the Darkness, and dispel the gross prejudices of it: he did moreover, by the manner of declaring his Doctrine, recommend it to our regard, and instruct us how to profess and propugn it.

For first, It is frequently taken notice of, by the Evangelists, that he taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes; that the people were astonished at his Doctrine, because he spake with Authority, *i. e.* as became the Majesty of *divine truth*; without affectation or artifice, without ostentation of Wit or Eloquence; not dealing in subtilties, nor descanting upon the traditions of Elders, or referring to the testimonies Sect. 1. Matth. 7. 29. Luk. 4. 32. Mark 1. 22.

of famous Rabbies; but he delivered plain and uſeful Inſtructions, in a grave, ſincere, and authoritative ſort, as a *Meſſenger of God*, fully ſatisfied of the truth of what he ſpake, and referring to the Conſcience of his Auditors, appealing to the Scriptures, and demanding audience and credit for his works, which proved his Miſſion from God. The things of God muſt be reverently handled; his truth is a *ſacred depoſitum*, which as we muſt not be aſhamed to own, ſo we muſt not triflingly expoſe. 'Tis too great and noble a thing, to be brought forth, barely to entertain or divert the Company; it carries its own Authority when ſolidly propoſed, and confirm'd by Sacred Writ, but 'tis enfeebled and diminiſh'd when dreſs'd *with exquiſite art*, as if it needed *trimming or varniſh*: It is profaned, if we ſo blend it with Fancy, Wit, Eloquence, or other ſmall Arts; that it ſerves only for an occaſion of ſhewing our ſelves, or that it appears not in its *native beauty* and majeſty,

by

by reaſon of the *ſpots and bedeckings* that we beſtow upon it; to ſhew our art not to ſerve the Intereſt of the truth. Religious truths are venerable, they had their proper ſeat in the Conſcience, muſt be received thither with a full Conviction, and rule there with a divine ſway; and we muſt endeavour to tranſmit and faſten them in the Conſcience of others, with all that Authority and venerable regard, that they have, or ought to have in our own.

Secondly, It's noted of Jeſus, that he taught with becoming freedom and boldneſs; his very Adverſaries confeſſed he taught the *way of God in truth, not regarding the perſon of men, Matth.* 22. 16. He conceal'd no neceſſary or uſeful truth for fear of offending. He freely and ſharply reproved the Scribes and Phariſees, though the moſt potent Faction, of greateſt intereſt and repute. He neither courted the people, nor their Rulers; he deſiſted not from refuting popular Errours, though they Sect. 2.

more than once took up ſtones to caſt at him; nor was diſcouraged, when he was told that *Herod* ſought to kill him. *Go ye* (ſaith he) *and tell that fox that I caſt out devils, and do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I ſhall be perfected*, Luk. 13. 31. There was nothing more offenſive to the Jews, than his healing on the Sabbath days, and the Phariſees who were exceedingly Superſtitious in that point, watched him with an evil Eye; yet he cured the ſick in their preſence, and confounded their ſuperſtition with his free diſcourſe upon that ſubject: *Is it not lawful to do good on the Sabbath days?* and which of you having an Ox or an Aſs fallen into a Pit, will not ſtreightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? *Luk.* 14. 1, 5. Thus he taught us ſincerely and freely to profeſs neceſſary and uſeful truth, and boldly to refute Errour, and reprove Vice; not to hold the truth with reſpect of perſons, nor in the juſt defence of it to fear the Faces of Men.

Yet

Yet *thirdly*, Jeſus taught with great Wiſdom and Prudence; taking fit ſeaſons, and accommodating himſelf to the needs and Capacities of Men. By familiar and apt Parables from things well known, he did inſtruct the vulgar, and at the ſame time did eſcape from the inſidious and captious; did paſs by the obſtinate and untreatable, leaving them in their blindneſs; or he ſhut their Mouths, and defeated their Snares. He *pointed and barb'd* an Arrow, which flew more directly, and ſtuck the faſter in their Conſciences, for the Parable it was *winged* with. Such was the Parable of the two Sons, whom their Father commanded to work in his Vineyard, repreſenting the inexcuſable obſtinacy and impenitency of the Phariſees; and that of the Huſbandmen miſerably deſtroy'd, for refuſing to their Lord the fruits of his Vineyard, for killing his Servants, and at laſt his Son, whom he ſent to reclaim them; for they themſelves confeſſed the juſtice of the proceed againſt Sect. 3.

againſt thoſe wicked Men, and therein paſt Sentence on themſelves, even whilſt they knew, *that he had ſpoken theſe Parables of them*, Matth. 21.41, 45. With like Wiſdom he defeated their captious queſtions, and put them to ſilence with his Interrogatories. Thus he aſſerted the Rights of God and the King; and yet avoided the ſnare of the *Herodians*; when they asked him concerning paying tribute to *Cæſar*, *Matth.* 22. 21. So he aſſerted his own Divinity, and ſilenced his Adverſaries; by queſtioning with them, how Chriſt could be both *the ſon and the Lord of David*, v. 45. So he ſilenced the Sadducees in their own way; for if they from the relation between the Woman and her ſeven Husbands, argued againſt a future ſtate, much more reaſonable was it to prove a future ſtate, from the Relation that God owned between himſelf and good men, even after their death, *viz.* that he is the God of *Abraham*, &c. for that relation is real and effectual, and therefore requires,

quires the exiſtence of the Subjects, that they *live to God* in a capacity of his love and favour. For *he is not the God of the dead but of the living*, Mat. 22. 31, *&c.* 'Twere endleſs to obſerve all the inſtances of that wiſdom and prudence, wherewith Jeſus refuted errours, and vindicated truth; not ſhewing himſelf afraid of his Adverſaries, and yet prudently avoiding them. After which Example, he hath willed us to be wiſe as Serpents, though innocent as Doves. Not to be aſhamed of him and his words in an *evil and adulterous generation*, and yet not to caſt *Pearl* before Swine, nor *holy things* to Dogs, nor imprudently to provoke the untreatable and unreaſonable.

Fourthly, The Holy Jeſus in all his Diſcourſe, ſhewed ſuch zeal and fervour, as manifeſted that he was in great earneſt, and executing a truſt, that he had received of God. In him was fulfill'd that prophetical paſſage, the *zeal of thine houſe hath even eaten me up*, Joh. 2. 17. he uſed diligence Sect. 4.

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in teaching, and ſharpneſs in reproof, when the caſe required it. Ye Hypocrites! Ye generation of Vipers! How can ye eſcape the damnation of Hell? So he rebukes the ſelf-conceited, wicked Phariſees, *Matth.* 23.33. Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence to me, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God; was the earneſt reproof he gave to *Peter*, who oppoſed his own fancies and prejudices to the wiſdom and truth of God, *Matth.* 16. 23. He loved to do the work of God, and refus'd not to travail for the Converſion of a poor Woman, and ſhe a Samaritan; neglecting his meat at a time when he was both hungry and weary; for this was his meat, *to do the will of him that ſent him, and to finiſh his work*, Joh. 4. 34.

Sect 5. Yet in the laſt place, This his zeal was tempered with a mighty pity and compaſſion, to the infirmities, needs, and prejudices of men. He was tender of their Souls, and pitiful to their Weakneſſes. His Bowels were moved in him, and he had compaſſion on

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the multitude; when he ſaw that they were ſcattered abroad as Sheep having no Shepherd, and fainted for lack of inſtruction, *Mat.* 9. 36. He did bear with the weakneſs and prejudices of his Diſciples, though he was grieved for, and complain'd of the dullneſs of their underſtanding, and hardneſs of their heart. He repeated his Inſtructions, expounded his Parables, heard and Anſwered their Queſtions, and endured their Infirmities. He wept over the infidelity and obſtinacy of the Jews, with paſſionate wiſhes, that they would have known the things of their peace in the day of their Viſitation. He foretold their deſtruction with ſadneſs, and all the expreſſions of pity and compaſſion.

From all which we learn, not only to receive the Chriſtian Doctrine with forwardneſs and readineſs of Mind, as that wherein the glory of God, and the intereſts of our Souls, are nearly concern'd: but alſo to profeſs it ſteadily, as thoſe that are fully perſwaded

perſwaded, both of the truth, and the high importance of it, being very zealous and in earneſt in teaching and defending it; uſing all wiſdom and prudence to gain, or ſilence the Enemies thereof; to defeat their deſigns, and avoid their ſnares; fearleſs of whatever may betide us in the regular, and neceſſary confeſſion of the truth; and with meekneſs, tenderneſs, and long-ſuffering, endeavouring to conquer the contrary errours and prejudices of Men.

This is the inſtruction we reap from the preaching of Jeſus; we are thence admirably inlightened in the true Principles of pure and undefiled Religion; and inſtructed how we ought to hold, profeſs, inculcate, and defend them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Life of Chriſt conſider'd as our Pattern and Example.

THE Son of God came into the World, to reſtore Religion and plant Holineſs in it, not only by the inſtruction of his Doctrine, but by the luſtre of a great Example. He hath not only guided us with his Mouth, but led us alſo by the hand; as we muſt abide in *his words*, ſo we muſt tread in his *ſteps*. Therefore he dwelt among us, that he might give the World (what it never had before) a perfect and unerring Example of Life; and therefore his Life is upon record by the care of the Holy Ghoſt, that we might have the inſtruction and the incouragement of it; and be obliged and perſwaded to make it the pattern of ours. In order to which, we ſhall firſt make an extract out of the holy Evangeliſts, of the Life of Jeſus, as an admirable pattern

pattern of all Vertue; and then conſider the inſtruction and the obligation of it.

Sect. 1. In the Life of Chriſt we have a perfect and unerring Example of Vertue, without any allay or mixture; ſo fitted to all conditions of Men, that in every caſe they may draw inſtruction, and encouragement from thence. More particularly

Firſt, Chriſt hath left us in his Life an Example of Piety; of a converſation led much with God, teſtifying a right knowledge, an affectionate ſenſe, a ſuperlative love of God, by all proper expreſſions and genuine fruits thereof. His Life was viſibly devoted to the ſervice of God, his fixed reſolution, and his profeſs'd buſineſs was to do his will. I came into the World, ſaith the holy Jeſus, *not to do my own will, but the will of him that ſent me*, Joh. 5. 30. Moſt ready he was to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, and execute every command of his Heavenly Father, *Matth.* 3. 15. this he

he accounted fit and becoming; 'twas more neceſſary in his eſteem, and pleaſant in his ſenſe of it, than his neceſſary food, *Joh.* 4. 32, 34. *I have meat to eat, that ye know not of, for my meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work.* Nor did his reſolution flag when tryed to the utmoſt; for he refuſed not to drink the Cup which his Father gave him; he prays that God's will may be done, with full conſent, and without any reluctance of his own; and he bowed his head upon the Croſs in humble ſubmiſſion to the Execution of the Divine Will. Matth. 26. 39.

He left us an Example too of conſtant and fervent devotion, teſtified by a reverence for, and adherence to the holy Scriptures, that contain'd the mind of God; by a diligent frequenting the publick Aſſemblies for the worſhip of God, both in the Temple and the Synagogues; by having recourſe to God upon every fit occaſion, and praiſing him and giving him thanks in all things; by

extraordinary Prayers and Faſting, and watching thereunto upon extraordinary occaſions, by a religious care of his Family, or conſtant attendants, praying with them and inſtructing them; and all this practiſed in the moſt intenſe degree, and reverent manner. He ſpake with all manner of regard and deference to *Moſes* and the Prophets, *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life*, Joh. 5. 39. and think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets; for whoſoever ſhall break one of the leaſt of theſe Commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, ſhall be call'd leaſt, *i.e.* ſhall have no part in the Kingdom of God, *Matth.* 5. he conſtantly worſhip'd in the Synagogues on Sabbath days, *Luk.* 4. 16. and was daily, that is, frequently in the Temple, *Mark* 14.49. and a religious obſerver of the Paſſover and other Feſtivals, *Joh.* 10. 22. he diſcourſed much of God, gave him thanks at his Meals, retired frequently for private Prayer and Heavenly

venly Solitude; he taught his Diſciples to pray, and he prayed with them; the Garden in which he was apprehended, was a ſort of Family-Chappel, or Oratory, whither Jeſus was wont to reſort, with his Diſciples, for the Exerciſe of their Family-Devotion, *Joh.* 18. 1, 2.

In the Life of Jeſus, we have a pattern of zeal for God and his Glory, tender, and earneſt, and conſtant; though pure from affectation, and from bitterneſs, not tranſporting him beyond juſt, and peaceable, and charitable bounds. Careful he was that God might have the glory of all that he ſaid and did, *Joh.* 14. 13. he never ſhewed himſelf ſo concern'd as when the honour of God was at ſtake, nor angry but when that was violated. This made him, who was meekneſs it ſelf, ſo ſharply reprove thoſe Monſters of Men, the Scribes and Phariſees, who made bold to ſerve themſelves of God, and made void his Commands by their Traditions, *Matth.* 23. therefore he ſeems

tranſported at the prophanation of the Temple, the Houſe of Prayer being turned into a Den of Thieves, *Luke* 19. 46. *Joh.* 2. 15. he rejected the Devils proffer of the Kingdoms of the World, the price of Idolatry, with holy indignation, Get the behind me Satan, *Matth.* 4. 10. and he rejects *Peter* as if he had been another Devil, when he oppoſed the will and the glory of God, *Matth.* 16. 23. Get thee behind me Satan, for thou art an offence unto me, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men.

So fervent and zealous was the piety of Jeſus, it was unaffected, yet great and conſtantly profeſſed, not boaſted, but unſhaken; that was not imprudently importune, and troubleſome to others, but ſteady and even, and abſolutely conquering all oppoſition it met withal. To love God with all the heart, and Soul, and ſtrength, includes ſomewhat more than a right knowledge, or honourable opinions of him; it implies fervour,

vour, and delight, and conſtant reſolution. Religious and holy Men, muſt put on a preſence and greatneſs of Mind, and not be afraid or aſhamed to appear what they are, ſuch as love God, and deſire, and ſeek, and delight in him above all things. Thus Jeſus teacheth us by his Example, in which alſo, we ſee a Life of Godlineſs and Devotion, not led in a Cloyſter, but (which is more perfect) in the World in a buſy ſtation, where Godlineſs and Charity went hand in hand, and took their turns; and he that was ſo zealous for God, was alſo uſeful and profitable to Men.

For *ſecondly*, In the Life of Chriſt we have an unparallel'd pattern of the greateſt good will, and nobleſt Charity towards men; evidenced in his whole Converſation, conſpicuous in all his Diſcourſes, the Life and Soul of every thing he did. For his Life was a conſtant Scene of Charity, and his Death the conſummation of it; for he laid down his Life for the behalf, and in the ſtead of Men, to pro- Sect. 2.

cure them the greateſt good they are capable of, reconciliation to God, and Eternal Life. To collect therefore the inſtances of his Charity, would be to recount all his Miracles, which St. *John* ſaith, the World could ſcarce contain the voluminous account of; 'twould be to recite the ſtory of his whole Life, which was one intire demonſtration of good will, a moſt uſeful and benign converſation. But to hint ſome particulars, He exemplified his Charity by a free and obliging Converſation; acceſſible and affable to all ſorts of men, complyant with their Cuſtoms, and eaſy in his demean toward them, ſo far as might conſiſt with Innocence and Prudence. For this frankneſs of his Converſation, he underwent the reproach of a *Wine-bibber, and a friend of ſinners*, *Matth.* 11. 19. And the ſupercilious Phariſees were offended at this, that he accepted the Perſons and the Invitations, and made himſelf a Gueſt to *Publicans and Sinners*, Matth. 9. 10. If he were a Prophet (ſay they) *he would*

would have known who touched him, for ſhe is a Sinner. But our Saviour anſwered them, that the *Phyſician* is proper Company for the *ſick*; that he converſed with all ſorts of men, becauſe he ſought the good of all; for he came to ſeek, and to ſave, and to call to repentance, *Matth.* 9. 12, 13. Nor indeed is it the property of Charity to be ſhy and eſtranged, moroſe and rigid; but to be complaiſant and acceſſible, and to pleaſe all Men, in all things that are innocent and inoffenſive. A good Man can't indeed choſe his intimate Friends among the diſſolute and profane rout; for what agreement hath Light with Darkneſs; but he is affable and courteous to all, and ſeparates not himſelf from their Converſation, unleſs in great Charity, by order of Church-Cenſure, for the bringing a Sinner, by ſhame, to Repentance and Amendment.

Again, Jeſus full of good will and Charity, ſtudied quietneſs, and to preſerve peace and order amongſt

Men. He eſpouſed no Party, nor provoked any by buſy pragmaticalneſs; he would not be a *judge or divider*, *Luke* 12. 14. Tender of giving offence, he was gentle and mild in his reproofs, where the caſe would admit of it. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith*, Matth. 14. 14. He both taught and practiſed Obedience and ſubjection to Government; that *Piety* ſhould not be a pretence to the diſcharge of *Loyalty*, but that *Cæſar* have his rights as well as God, *Mat.* 22. 21. He paid the tribute of the Sanctuary, at the expence of a Miracle, rather than he would give offence, notwithſtanding he might have held himſelf excuſed in ſtrict right from that payment, *Matth.* 17. 27. He rebuked *Peter* when he drew the Sword againſt the Officers of the High Prieſt, though it was to defend his *innocent* Maſter; and denounced upon that occaſion deſtruction to all that ſhall uſurp the Sword without legal Commiſſion; *They that* ſo *take the Sword, ſhall periſh by it*, Matth. 26. 52. Thus he taught

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us by Example as well as Precept, to follow Peace, to ſtudy the quiet and welfare of Societies, to do what in us lies to render Government eaſy and proſperous; as a noble inſtance of Charity and good will to Mankind. Farther, Jeſus exemplified his Charity, and inſtructed ours, by that pitiful and compaſſionate ſenſe that he conſtantly expreſſed, of the Needs, and Miſeries, and Misfortunes of Men. *He had compaſſion on the multitude, and heal'd their ſick*, Matth. 14. 14. His Bowels were moved, when he ſaw the *deſolate* Widow mourning over her *only comfort*, then departed, and in his pity he reſtored her Son to life, *Luk.* 7. 13. He wept over the City of *Jeruſalem*, at the thought of that deſolation that was to come upon it, though as a juſt puniſhment for their outragious injuries againſt himſelf, *Luk.* 19. 41. much more was his tender ſpirit grieved, and *troubled for the hardneſs of their hearts*, Mark 3. 5. and becauſe they knew not in the day of their Viſitation, the things of their Peace.

Peace. This is Charity like that of God; who is the *Father of pities*, and full of Bowels, *James* 5. 11. and such must ours be if we be his Children; we must *put on as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, be tender-hearted*, and compassionate one towards another, *Colos.* 3. 12.

Nor did the Charitable Jesus only pity, but he relieved also the needs of Men. His Charity set on work all his powers, and drew forth all his treasures for the help and succour of the miserable. *He went about doing good*, Acts 10. 38. his very Garments were tinctured with benign influences; and all his Miracles were works of Charity, demonstrations of his love; and he did these good turns most readily and chearfully, in the most obliging manner, and most profitable kind. He gave Alms to the Poor, out of his small and *precarious* Revenue, *Joh.* 13. 29. He relieved at once the bodily and spiritual wants of sick and sinful Men; and taught us to judge our Charity by the good fruits

fruits of it, by our readineſs to every labour of love.

Again, the Charity of Jeſus exemplified was of the right Stamp, not ſoon angry, nor at all revengeful, but ſhew'd it ſelf in meekly bearing affronts, and forgiving injuries. When his Diſciples would have fetch'd fire from Heaven, to avenge the rudeneſs of the Samaritans; they miſtook (as he tells them) the Spirit of their Maſter, for he came *not to deſtroy, but to ſave*, Luk. 9.55. Therefore as all the contradiction and oppoſition of brutiſh men, did not alter the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition towards them; ſo when he fell into their malicious hands, he endured their mockery and cruelties, without ever reviling them, or anſwering again to their taunts and deriſions, and when they put him to death, he forgave the moſt ungrateful Enemies that ever were; he mildly aſcribed their wickedneſs rather to Ignorance than an obſtinate malice, and prayed for them to his Father; *Father forgive them, for*

they

they know not what they do, Luk. 23, 34.

Thus the Holy Jesus is become a pattern to us of a busy and fruitful Charity, full of good fruits, and of a meek, long-suffering, gentle and forgiving Charity; that could no more revenge ill turns, than refuse to do good ones. And this his beneficence and love to men it was universal; not confined to a Party, to his Followers and admirers, but extending it self to all men; and to all their needs. He did good to the unthankful and to the injurious; to those that did him all the evil they could, and this good he was constantly ready to do, for his Charity was fervent and unwearied; he sent none away ashamed that had recourse to him for succour, but rather wondering at his kindness, blessing God who had rais'd him up, and blessing him for so *frank* and great relief as he bestowed on them. No opposition could make him give over his charitable designs, and he pursued them with all manner of condescention as well as industry; making

making himſelf a Servant, or as one that ſerved; bearing the follies, the prejudices, and the weakneſs of men, and denying himſelf his own liberty, and eaſe, and times of refreſhment; ſpending the day in charitable imployments, and redeeming time as he could from the night, and from ſleep, for Heavenly Solitude, which no doubt was very delightful to him that ſo perfectly knew God, and the happineſs of enjoying him; and therefore 'twas the greater ſelf-denial, to cut himſelf ſhort in thoſe *divine pleaſures*, for the ſake of doing good to Men.

By this Example of Chriſt we learn, that it is *more bleſſed to give than to receive*, that it is better to forgive injuries than to revenge them, that we have no reaſon to except againſt any labour of love, and that true Charity can't be cold and indifferent; that it is inſolent pride and folly to ſtand upon punctilio's of place or prerogative, but that rather after the example of Chriſt, he that is *greateſt* ſhould become *ſervant of all.* *Thirdly,*

Sect. 3. *Thirdly*, Jesus hath left us an Example of spotless Innocence and purity, from all the defilements of the Flesh and the World; of the due governing those desires and affections that respect pleasure and delight. *John* the Baptist put on the habit of a Hermite, professed abstinence and severity, *Matth.* 11.19. but Jesus *came eating and drinking*, not forbearing the use, but the excess of comfortable enjoyments. He neither retired from the World, nor yet ran eagerly into the embraces of it; his conversation was grave, but not morose; he was above the vanities and impertinencies of the World; but was not troublesome in quarrelling and censuring such as were innocent and tolerable. He ever expressed a mind full of the sense of a *better* World, and too great to be allured or cheated with the gaieties of this. He with holy indignation rejected the proffer of riches and honour, yea all the *Kingdoms of the World*, when his Innocence must be the price, and God must be dishonor'd for

for them, *Luk.* 4. 6. He choſe not his pleaſures and delights from ſenſe, and the World, but from Reaſon and Religion, from ſpiritual injoyments and well doing. He lived upon the Providence of God, and the benevolence of his Followers, who miniſtred to him of their ſubſtance, without ſolicitude or complaining; though he had no ſetled Revenue nor fixed abode; not ſo much as where to lay his head, *Matth.* 8. 20. Yet he had a chearful, generous, and hoſpitable mind in that mean condition, and was better pleaſed in it, than Worldly Men are in their greateſt affluence and ſuperfluities. His converſation was uſeful and charitable, ſavouring of God, and Reaſon, and the Spirit, not of the World and Fleſh. He choſe to ſome ſeverities and hardſhip, faſting and watching, and ſelf-denyals; not becauſe he needed them, but to ſhew us the way of keeping the body tame and governable; that it may neither clog and hinder, nor boldly interrupt the application of our minds to God and things

things divine. From which Example we learn the true rules and meaſures of Temperance, how we are to eſtimate, purſue, and uſe the pleaſures and delights of Life, *viz.* that in our *ſetled* judgment and *fixed choice*, preferring the things of another Life before all the intereſts and delights of this, and keeping a conſtant acquaintance and converſation with thoſe better things; we abſtain from all that uſe and injoyment, not only which makes an Inroad upon Juſtice or Charity, but from that too which deadeneth and palls our taſte for Spiritual things, and abates our delight in them: Such pleaſures as make the mind ſoft, and feeble, and trifling, and leave a fondneſs for, and awaken our paſſions towards this World, but cool and traſh us in our deſires and purſuits of a better. Moreover, that we not only be chearful and contented in every lot, but that we daily contract our deſires and Appetites, and have our minds more free from importune and violent longings. And

then

then (as the consummation of the habit) that the sense of carnal and secular delights, be swallowed up in the brighter and more *gustful* pleasures of Virtue and Holiness. When we are crucified to the World, and almost wholly indifferent, as to the delights of it; when we neither doat, nor long, nor fret, nor envy, nor yet swell with hope, or seem ravished with injoyment; but rather think meanly of all the entertainments of this World, as having nothing agreeable to our Heavenly Mind, nor worthy of a passionate regard. To this consummate State we must be daily pressing forward, and judge of our safety by our approach to it, *viz.* as the sense of Worldly delights cooleth, and that of Heavenly ones grows and swells.

Fourthly, In the Life of Christ, we Sect. 4. have an admirable Pattern of an Invincible Fortitude, of a Mind as much above the terrours of sense, as the delights of it; that could no more be *broken* by the troubles and misfor-

tunes of Life, than *ſoften'd* by the injoyments and pleaſures thereof. He is become an Example to us how to maintain our Reſolution and Integrity; and to keep a due decorum in the midſt of great ſufferings, or great fears; and not to be vanquiſh'd by the frowns of the World, any more than by the blandiſhments and allurements of it.

For Jeſus was a *man of ſorrows, and acquainted with griefs*; he drank deep of the Cup of Afflictions, being aſſaulted on every ſide; afflicted by God, and perſecuted by Men, and purſued by the utmoſt art and malice of Devils. He ſuffered contempt, and contumely, and the blaſphemous contradictions of Sinners; their inſolent mockeries and barbarous inſults and triumphs over him, as baffled and conquer'd: *Save thy ſelf, thou King of Iſrael, and come down from the Croſs, and we will believe on thee*, Luk. 23.37. and when he was not in their hands, yet he had always reaſon to apprehend their malice, and to fear their power.

power. His condition was mean and friendleſs, and his Adverſaries potent, ſuch as had perſecuted former Prophets, and openly declared their hatred of him; ſuch as had the Government in their hands, and had uſed it againſt him, by decreeing to Excommunicate thoſe that ſhould own him.

But in the midſt of theſe his frequent Sufferings, and continual fears, he maintain'd a firm Reſolution, and a venerable decorum; and left us an Example, that we ſhould tread in his ſteps. He was neither fearleſs of evil, nor ſtupidly inſenſible under it. When his Paſſion drew nigh, his Soul was troubled, and ſore amazed, heavy and exceeding ſorrowful, *Matth.* 26. 38. Though he refuſed not the Cup, yet he pray'd, if poſſible, it might be removed, *Matth.* 26. 29. He reſented the Hypocriſy, the Ingratitude, and Cruelty of his Enemies; *Many good works have I done, for which of theſe do ye ſtone me?* Joh. 10. 32. He did not dare, and provoke their rage, but

prudently avoided it, whilſt innocently he might do ſo. But he did not ſo fear the power of his Adverſaries, as to omit his duty; or to do any evil thing for the avoidance of it. He reſolutely profeſſed and taught the truth, which they were not able to bear; He encountred the errours and prejudices of the Age; and reproved the Vices of it. He did not ſooth or flatter any party of Men; but dealt plainly, and ſpake freely, and lanced *ſmartly* the *ulcerated* Hypocriſy of the Scribes and Phariſees, that were the moſt potent and popular Faction. He would not ſhrink from the truth, nor mince the matter, though they heard him with *malice* in their hearts, and *ſtones in their hands*, Joh. 10.31. He would venture again among them to raiſe *Lazarus* from the dead, though they had ſo lately ſought to ſtone him, *Joh.* 11.8. He would go up to the Paſsover, according to the Law, though he fall thereby into the hands of the Chief Prieſts, who will be ſure to *Sacrifice* him to their rage. When

When he was overtaken with evil, he did not ſtruggle and complain; he was not over-born and ſunk with it; he indured all their taunts and reproaches, without being diſcouraged; and when he was reviled he anſwer'd not. And he ſuffer'd with undaunted Courage and reſolution, and unbroken Patience, a violent, ſhameful, and cruel Death. Nor was it lowneſs of Spirit that made him ſilent; for he was not afraid to confeſs the truth to the laſt. But his Mind was exalted above the impreſſion of evil, by divine conſideration, Faith in God, and reverence of his Government. He knew the power they had againſt him was from Heaven, *Joh.* 19. 11. and he acquieſced in the equity and goodneſs of the divine determination and diſpoſal. Hence he maintain'd his Empire over the Paſſions, free from the diſquietude of anxious Fear, or the torment of ouragious Anger, the ſmart of peeviſh Impatience, or the ſinking load of melancholy deſpair. He poſſeſſed his Soul in Pati-

ence, ſteady in the greateſt change of condition, as one that expected it, that was not mightily concern'd at it, that conſider'd chiefly how he might adorn every Lot, and honour the ſupream diſpoſer of it.

From whoſe great Example we learn, not fooliſhly and imprudently to provoke Enemies, or to throw our ſelves into their hands, or bring our ſelves into a ſtate of ſuffering; but that we chearfully take up the Croſs, when God lays it in our way, ſo as we cannot, with a ſafe Conſcience, ſtep over, or beſide it. We learn too, to conſider the ſtate we are in, and not to flatter our ſelves with a conſtant immunity from the afflictions of it, to expect as Jeſus did, the *hour* and the aſſaults of the powers *of darkneſs:* At leaſt always to remember, that there is nothing unchangeable but God, nor conſtant but his favour. That we ever mix with the conſiderations of this ſtate, our lively hopes of a better; for then only will theſe *momentany* afflictions

ſeem

ſeem light and ſhort, when the *maſſy* Crown of eternal glory is put into the counter-ballance. That we learn to value our ſelves altogether upon our intereſt in God, and in the World to come; that ſo we may neither inordinately fear, nor reſent the loſs of ſuch things as leave our greateſt concern and intereſt intire & untouch'd, and ſecure to us. That we may then rejoice in our better portion, and be thankful to the donor of it, when he cuts us ſhort in the poſſeſſions and intereſts of this Life. Yea, that we rejoice in every condition of Life, ſo far as it may adminiſter to our Eternal Salvation; and that we be upon our guard to do nothing, that is unbecoming the dignity we are advanced unto by the grace of God and the expectations we have from him. That therefore all our contraſts with the evils of this World, may be as *unpaſſionate* as is poſſible; and we our ſelves as calm, unmov'd, and generous, as becometh the Heirs of a better.

We ſee that all the Afflictions of

Jeſus did not leſſen him with God nor good Men; no more can ours, if we bear them as he did. Nay he ſhone brighteſt in ſuffering, by the Evidence he gave of a great Mind in a narrow Fortune, and an afflicted State. So that we are invited to wiſh for his Portion, and to be in his ſtead; rather than to pity him, or dread his condition. We ſee too that though his ſufferings were incomparably great, the divine ſtrength and conſolations were ſufficient for him, and the ſame God has promiſed not to lay upon us more than he will inable us to bear, and we ſhall be aſhamed to ſigh under our pettit burdens, if we conſider how holily and compoſedly Jeſus bore thoſe vaſt and heavy loads. There is alſo no provocation to anger, fear, or impatience, which Jeſus hath not conquer'd; and thereby made it eaſy for us to do ſo after him. For how can we complain of any portion, that is far leſs bitter than that of the Son of God was. How ſhall we complain of God, if he chaſtens us gently for

our

our ſins, and for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs; when he ſo grievouſly bruiſed his own Son for *our* iniquities, who himſelf was innocent and pure. Or how can we think much of any ill treatment from Men, after that which Jeſus met withal. Never any perſon deſerved ſo well from the World, never any ſuffered ſo barbarouſly from it. But nothing can harm that doth not provoke us; and we ſee from the Example of Chriſt, and a multitude of his eminent followers of all conditions, that it is both poſſible and glorious to ſurmount all the afflictions of *this life*, to expect the changes and *tempeſtuous* Calamities of it, without anxious fear; and to bear them, without murmuring and deſpair.

Fifthly, In the Life of Jeſus, we have an unparallel'd Example, of wonderful humility and lowlineſs of mind; and he hath bidden us *learn of him to be meek and lowly*, Matth. 11. 29. the Apoſtate Angels became ſuch, by aſpiring to be higher; but the Son Sect. 5.

of

of God emptied and humbled himself, to the form of a Servant, to the portion of Sinners, to the Death of the Cross; *he made himself of no reputation*, *Phil.*2.7. He was not ashamed of the meanness of that state he had descended into; nor did he seek to appear other or greater than he was. He sought not his own glory, but the honour of him that sent him, *Joh.*8.50, *&c.* When the people admired his Works, he took care that God might have the praise of them, professing that he had received all from the Father, who was *greater than he*; that he could do nothing of himself but as the Father gave him commandment and power. In his whole Life there is not the least passage that savours of *vain-glory*. He conceal'd his Works of Fame and Wonder as much as might be, and laid restraints on the publishers of them. He would not permit his Disciples to publish his glorious Transfiguration till after his Resurrection. And when to fulfil a Prophecy he rode in triumph to *Jerusalem*, he was

still

ſtill a *humble* King, riding upon the foal of an Aſs, and going then to humble himſelf to the ſhameful death of the Croſs, *Joh.* 12. 15. He diſputed not the will of God, whatever pains or condeſcentions were implied in doing or ſuffering it. He came not to be miniſtred unto but to miniſter; and he yielded himſelf with courteous condeſcention to all ſorts of Men. He diſdain'd not the pooreſt or the vileſt, nor ſtood upon punctilio's of ſtate or diſtance; for he had taken upon him to be the Servant of God, and a diſpenſer of his grace to Men. He ſtoop'd therefore ſo low as to waſh his Diſciples Feet, the meaneſt office of a Servant; and he did this to give us an Example, that we ſhould learn humility of him, *Joh.* 13. 15. And as he was ſweet and lowly towards all, and entirely ſubmitted to the will of God, ſo he could bear to be ill thought of, and evil intreated, indured meekly the contempt and obloquy, that he moſt unjuſtly met withal. He did not aggravate the affront, by ſuffering

pride

pride and ſelf-conceit to mix with his reſentment of it, but mildly expoſtulated with thoſe that affronted him, in ſuch ſort as might convince and melt them: If I by *Beelzebub* caſt out Devils, by whom do your Children caſt them out? *Matth.* 12. 27. ſo he refutes the moſt blaſphemous imputation of the Phariſees; who aſcribed his Divine Works to a Confederacy with Hell. He mildly cenſured perſons that were in a fault, if there were hopes to bring them to Repentance, and caſt a covering over their ſhame: *Go and ſin no more.* And *he that is without ſin let him caſt the firſt ſtone*, Joh. 8. 7, 11. Thus was he at once free from any high conceit of his own Excellencies, and from being a proud and cenſorious Remarker of the defects and faults of others; gentle towards all Men, lowly in his own eſteem of himſelf, and a humble Servant of the will of God.

Now from this Example we learn, that true humility conſiſts not in *Satyrical* Declamations againſt our ſelves;

ſelves; which are often rather the effects and inſtruments of ſpiritual Pride: but to be humble, is to have a high veneration of God, and a profound ſubmiſſion to him; it is to eſtimate and conſider our ſelves as abſolutely depending on his free goodneſs; it is to aſcribe all that is good wholly unto God the Author of every *perfect gift*, and to call nothing our own but our Folly and Sins; to be content to be diſparaged and meanly thought of; and to be willing to give to others that praiſe that is their due: It is to be free from oſtentation and vain-glory, to be courteous and condeſcending, to love to be conceal'd, to be modeſt and treatable, content with a low ſtation, and ſubmitting to rule and government; to be moderate in our deſigns, and calm in our purſuits, patient of diſappointment, and candid towards the faults and infirmities of our Neighbours. And all this becauſe we are *ſelf-diffident*, and depend upon God, and acknowledge him to be all, and our ſelves but Vanity and nothing. And

And what temptation can we have to Pride, when Jesus was such a Pattern of Humility? Never was there such Knowledge, Wisdom and Power in any Man; nor was there ever any so full of the spirit of God, and yet he was meek and lowly: Who was the Heir of all things, the desire of all Nations, the Consolation of *Israel*, the glory of the Gentiles, and whom the Seas and Wind, and all things obey'd, he having all Power in Heaven and Earth. What can we possess of comparable value to all this? or what can we contrive or bring to pass, comparable to the undertaking of Christ, and the great design of his Doctrine and Miracles; of his Life and Death? But we have much more reason to be humble, for whereas the great indowments of Jesus were not blemish'd with any fault of his, we have nothing but folly and shame to call our own. Repentance is our best Wisdom, and that is a conviction of Sin and Folly; and yet we are unsteady in our Repentance, and frequently

quently depart from our better purpoſes, and have reaſon to bluſh and be humbled for ſo doing. Beſides, it was the Wiſdom and Perfection of Jeſus, that kept him from being cheated, or impoſing on himſelf: Pride is all errour and deluſion, but humility is truth. 'Twas humility that made all his other excellencies illuſtrious, and render'd him at once highly beloved of God and Men. And from his Example we learn, that he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted; for we ſee Jeſus for his humility exalted to the right hand of God, and Crown'd with glory and honour.

Laſtly, As for particular relative Virtues, Chriſt indeed did not enter into all Relations; but his Example was ſufficiently compleat without it. He intended us a pattern in ſpecial of the moſt eminent Virtues, and moſt difficult to our frail and corrupt natures; of ſubſtantial and zealous Piety, univerſal and fervent Charity, generous contempt of the World, invincible Fortitude, and gentle and Sect. 6.

ſelf-

ſelf-denying Meekneſs and Humility; and he that follows him thus far, will need no farther inſtruction; but may eaſily become his own guide. He in whom Chriſt is thus *formed*, will certainly adorn every relation, and excel in it. 'Twill be natural and eaſy for him to conceive, what the holy, and charitable, the meek and lowly Jeſus, would have done in ſuch circumſtances, if he had entred into them; and then he hath his pattern to go and do likewiſe. Nor yet are we without the Example of Jeſus for our direction in ſeveral inſtances of this ſort. His ſubjection to his Parents is upon record; and his tender care of his Mother, even in his laſt extremities, making proviſion for her on the Croſs, by recommending her to the care of his beloved Diſciple, *Joh.* 19. 27. His quiet ſubjection to Governours, when unjuſtly proſecuted by them. His pious care for the inſtruction of his Family, and training them up in Religion and Piety. But (as I ſaid before) he that hath

hath received the Spirit of Chriſt, will not fail to expreſs it in every condition; and he that acts by the meaſures of Piety and Charity, Purity and Humility, ſhall diſcharge himſelf of the duty of every relation, and be a true Follower of Jeſus in it.

This therefore may ſuffice for an extract of the Life of Chriſt, as a perfect unparallel'd pattern of all Holineſs, Virtue, and Goodneſs; that which follows is, That we apply the Light of this Illuſtrious Example, for our inſtruction, in the abſolute neceſſity, genuine nature, due extent, and admirable excellency of true Holineſs and the Chriſtian Life.

CHAP. IV.

The particular inſtruction we reap from the Life of Chriſt.

THE Life of Jeſus conſider'd as our Example, doth fully inform and perſwade us, Firſt, Of the Sect. 1.

abſolute neceſſity of holineſs, in order to the Viſion of God; and that the undertaking of Chriſt for us will no farther avail us, than as we are made partakers of his Spirit, and do copy out the Excellencies of his Life. 'Twas a deſign worthy of the Son of God, to plant and reſtore Holineſs in the World, by his Doctrine and Example, by his Life and Death, by all that he ſaid and did to miniſter inſtruction and help thereunto, and to bind it upon us with ſuch ſacred Obligations, and faſt ties, as are not eaſily to be broken. It is true, that Holineſs in general, that Piety, Juſtice, Charity, Sobriety in particular, do attract us with their *native* Beauty, and proper *luſtre*; we can't but diſcern the neceſſity of theſe Virtues to the perfection of our nature, to the attainment of Peace and Happineſs, to the good and welfare of Society, and to the rendring us capable of injoying God. But becauſe the voice of reaſon is too faint and low, and its repreſentations too languid and feeble

feeble to be much regarded, in the croud and noiſe of impetuous Luſts and Paſſions; and authority, example and cuſtom, falſe notions and prejudices, and levity of mind, oppoſe themſelves ſtrongly to the dictates of Conſcience, and endeavour to hide the ſhame, and abate the folly and abſurdity of Vice: Behold therefore God hath ſpoken from Heaven to awaken our *drowſy* Faculties; and ſent his Son to ſhew us the only way thither. We may now be infinitely certain, that there is no entring into the glory of God, by any other path, than that which Jeſus walk'd in; that we can become the Children of his love no other way, than by being conformed to the Image of his dear Son; that we are not capable in this life, of any greater good than to have Chriſt formed in us; for this was God's ultimate deſign in giving his Son to us; that we through him might be made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. What a veneration for Religion, and

love of Holineſs ſhould this conſideration beget in us; that it is the beſt thing we are capable of, the ſum of all God's merciful and kind intentions towards us; that beſt of Gifts, which the charitable Jeſus, by his Incarnation, Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, (by all that he hath done, or ſhall do for us to the end of time) doth aim to beſtow upon us, to indow us withal. What a fooliſh and wretched judgment do we then make, if in oppoſition to the Wiſdom and goodneſs of God we prefer Luſt and Folly, and ſenſual delights? What divine Light and Grace do we reſiſt and deſpiſe; if we ſtill *abide in darkneſs*, continue in ſin? And how fooliſh, falſe, and inſignificant, are all our pretences to be Chriſtians; whilſt we are led by *another ſpirit* than that of Chriſt; and follow any Example ſooner than his? For this is to reflect upon the Wiſdom of God, and to deſpiſe his Grace, to reject his counſel for our Salvation, and to *judge our ſelves unworthy of Eternal Life.*

Secondly,

Secondly, From the Life of Chriſt conſider'd as our Copy and pattern, we are infallibly informed, wherein pure and undefiled Religion doth conſiſt; or what are the things undoubtedly pleaſing unto God. The Life of Chriſt was deſigned to be a perfect and *unerring* Example; ſuch as the World needed, but never had before, nor ſhould receive again. There can therefore be no heights nor degrees of perfect goodneſs, which his Life was a ſtranger to. But from his practice we learn, what are the things moſt agreeable to the mind of God; and moſt effectually recommending us to his love. And from him we learn, that the Eſſence of true Religion conſiſts in ſpiritual holineſs; that the moſt perfect Life, is a life of Charity and well doing; that to lay out our lives, and to be ready to lay them down, for the glory of God, and the good of Men; this is the top and *conſummation* of Religion. When the inſpired Writers of the Life of Jeſus propound him to Sect. 2.

our imitation, they do not ſhew him in a Cloyſter, ranting at the World, and diſdaining the Society of thoſe that live in it, as unclean or leſs holy: we hear nothing of ecſtaſies, and raptures, and paſſive unions with God in the fund of the Soul, of whippings and rolling himſelf upon thorns and nails, and other ſevere Penances; of Miracles done in a private Cell, meerly for his own reputation, and to ſhew how dear he was to God upon the account of his auſtere and retired Life. After this ſort, the Saints of the *Roman* Church are propounded as patterns of the moſt Heroick Deeds and perfect living. But if this be perfection, and the height of that Religion which Chriſt deſign'd to incourage; the holy Evangeliſts have quite miſtaken the account of his Life; which was (as they report it) an exact tranſcript of his Doctrine: teaching us to ſeek perfection, by being like God in wiſdom and goodneſs. In a word, to practiſe all Virtue as we have opportunity, and a-

bove

bove all others to excel in Charity, to have our intentions and affections pure and holy, and to value our ſelves altogether upon the intereſts of another Life, but very little upon any advantage of this; herein conſiſts the *true ſpirit*, and *height*, and *perfection* of Religion, as it was taught and exemplified in the Life of Chriſt. It doth not then conſiſt in a blind ſubmiſſion of our judgments to unintelligible Myſteries; in a zealous adhering to a party, or in any particular Mode of worſhip, much leſs in the pompous ſplendour of external rites; in beautifying and enriching Altars, Shrines, and Images; in diſtinguiſhing days and meats, in vows of obedience, in voluntary or impoſed Penances, in devout geſtures, or any thing of that ſort: in all which *unprofitable* exerciſes, a man may be extreamly *buſy* and zealous; and yet not tranſcribe any part of the Life of Jeſus. And a Man may on the contrary walk as Chriſt walked; and yet have little or nothing to

do with the forementioned matters. He accepted indeed the oblation, and the penitential affectionate addreſs of *Mary Magdalen*, when ſhe anointed his Feet; he vindicated the Woman and her deed; and taught us not raſhly to cenſure the devout perſons, ſtriving ſenſibly to expreſs their inward fervent Reſentments: but at the ſame time he grants that Charity to the Poor is the moſt acceptable and indeſpenſible Offering, and in ordinary the better Teſt of Religion. As for himſelf he went about doing good; and taught us by his Example that the Kingdom of God is not Meats and Drinks, or any thing elſe, but Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghoſt: a pure, a charitable, humble, and godly Mind and Life; without which nothing elſe can avail us, and with which in Sincerity and good Degree, nothing elſe can be wanting to render us accepted of God, and happy in his Favour. In ſhort, if Religion were what ſome men make of it, the life of Chriſt is very

Mat. 26. 10, &c.

very far from being an excellent Draught and Copy of it: and on the other hand, if the life of Chriſt be a true guide in Religion, then it will be found at laſt to be quite another thing than too many fooliſhly and wretchedly take up withal.

Thirdly, From the Life of Chriſt we learn, that his Diſciples ought to excel, and not to reſt in the loweſt attainments. We do not elſe imitate his Life, which was a Copy of the moſt worthy and excellent performances of virtue and goodneſs in its greateſt *height*, and brighteſt *luſtre*. He hath required that our Righteouſneſs *exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*; even ſuch of them, who not only pretended, but did indeed live according to the ſtrictneſs of their Sect, *Matth.* 5. 20. And he will take an account of us what we have done more than others, and what approaches we have made toward the Heavenly Pattern, the perfection of God, *Matth.* 5. 47, 48. *If you love them that love you, what* Sect. 3.

do

do you more than others? Do not even Publicans ſo? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. To abſtain from ſcandalous Crimes, is but the firſt *Element* of Chriſtian Life; if we had learn'd of Chriſt, we muſt not only put of the old converſation, ſtinking with *corrupt manners*, but we muſt become new Men, and bear the Image of God in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs. To be Chriſtians is to *put on Chriſt*, to have *him formed in us*, to have the *ſame mind* in us *that was in Jeſus*, to *be led by his ſpirit*, and *to walk as he walked.* And that certainly implies more, than the forſaking of Idols, and the groſſer debaucheries of thoſe that knew not God; it ſignifies too, that Chriſtians ſhould be as conſpicuouſly and eminently good, as thoſe miſerable Pagans were notoriouſly and infamouſly wicked. That we be rich in good works, *fill'd with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are to the praiſe of the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 1. 11. That we ſhine

Epheſ. 4. 17, &c. Galat. 3. 27. Galat. 4. 19. Phil. 2. 5. 1 Joh. 2. 6.

ſhine as lights before Men, and become the Salt of the Earth; ſuch Examples of all that is good, as may reſtrain, direct, provoke, and influence others; ſeaſon their Manners, and preſerve them from ſtinking.

Chriſt who hath ſet us ſo admirable a Copy, will expect of us a proportionable imitation; and he that walks in the *flats* of Virtue, upon the *Borders* of Vice, that indulgeth himſelf in the utmoſt of what he judges may be innocent; doth not walk as Chriſt walked, who buſied himſelf in the beſt things; choſe what was moſt ſevere towards himſelf, but moſt for God's honour, and towards others moſt kind and charitable. He that barely ſtudies to be free from thoſe ſins that are *clamorous* in his Conſcience, doth not anſwer the deſign of the Goſpel; which hath a farther aim, to render its Votaries more perfect; partakers of the divine nature, and Heavenly minded.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Obligation and Assistance of the Example of Jesus.

HAving seen what instruction the Life of Christ contains, how it demonstrates to us the absolute necessity of Holiness, the true nature and greatest instances thereof. Let us now consider, what obligations to Holiness, and what incouragement and assistance therein, is derived to us from this great Exemplar, and admirable Pattern of the Life of Jesus. For

Sect. 1. *First*, What else could be the design of God in thus giving his Son, not only to be a Sacrifice for sin, but also an Example to us of holy living? What, but to oblige us most powerfully and indispensably to be followers of him in the Excellencies of his Spirit, and of his Conversation. God gave his Son to be the Light of the World; not only by the Introduction

duction of more excellent Rules of Life, but alſo by the luſtre of a great Example; and his purpoſe and decree was, that we might thereby *be conform'd to the Image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren*, Rom. 8. 29. Therefore Jeſus hath commanded us to learn of him, *Matth.* 11.29. and he that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf to walk as he alſo walked, 1 *Joh.* 2. 6. the ſum of our Chriſtian Profeſſion and Duty, is *to put on Chriſt*, Rom. 13. 14. *i. e.* to imitate the whole Body of his Sanctity; to bear the Image of the Heavenly, to reſemble our Lord and Maſter in the Excellencies of his Spirit, and in the actions of his holy Life. And this was the end, not only of his Life, but his Death too, *he ſuffer'd for us, leaving us an Example that we ſhould follow his ſteps*, 1 Pet. 2. 21. His Blood was the expiation of our Sin; but his Death too was a great Example of Self-denial, and Charity, of Conſtancy in the truth, of reſignation to God, of Patience

Patience and Meekneſs, and other ſuffering Graces; and the deſign was to reconcile our wills, as well as our Perſons to his heavenly Father. 'Tis of great uſe to us to have *a living Rule*; an unerring Pattern of the divine and happy Life. Such a *Perfect* Exemplar the World wanted, all that had gone before having been blurred and blotted: the beſt of Men were Examples of Vice as well as Virtue, and the Precepts of wiſe Men, though ſhort of perfection, were held for impracticable, becauſe they themſelves lived not as they taught; the Wiſdom of their Diſcourſes ſerving but to reproach the folly of their actions. Nor could Virtue plant and ſupport it ſelf by Philoſophy and argumentation; whilſt Vice had got the reputation of cuſtom, and the advantage of mighty Examples. God therefore ſent his Son from Heaven, to redeem men from their *vain converſation received by tradition*, confirmed by the *cuſtom of their Fathers*; not only by laying down Rules and

Precepts

Precepts of a Divine Life, and holy Converſation, but by ſetting a perfect, amiable, and inviting pattern of it. Now he that hath vouchſafed us ſo great a grace, hath obliged us to uſe it; and he that gave the Example wills us to follow it. Beſide, ſince the Life of Chriſt is but the tranſcript of his holy Precepts, our imitation is obedience and duty; and if we neglect to walk as he walked, we at once renounce his authority and deſpiſe his grace, and fruſtrate the deſign of his undertaking for us.

But *ſecondly*, The obligation of ſo great an Example is not greater than the energy and aſſiſtance of it. So that if we but look unto Jeſus and conſider his Life, it will by a holy influence and efficacy aſſiſt to the conducting of ours. For beſides the general advantage of an Example, which is ever more prevalent than Precept; that of Jeſus hath a *ſingular* influence, and *eminent advantage* to recommend and aſſiſt Piety and Goodneſs. For Sect. 2.

Firſt,

First, In it the whole circle of our duty is repreſented, as poſſible, and eaſy, and ſuitable to our Life and State. Jeſus ſo converſed with Men, that they after his Example might converſe with one another. He propounded himſelf to our imitation, as a Man of the ſame mould with our ſelves; in a Converſation fitted to our circumſtances, and complying with the weakneſs and neceſſities of our ſtate. His Life was Natural, Eaſy, Innocent, Uſeful, well conſiſtent with humane Society, and greatly advancing it. We can't indeed arrive at his ſpotleſs Purity; but we may Copy out his Integrity, his Conſtancy, his fervent Devotion, and induſtrious Charity; he hath ſhewn us by his Example, that his Yoke is eaſy, and his Commandments are not grievous. The Life he led, approves it ſelf to our Reaſon and Judgment, as fit for us; and therefore practicable by us. It is not a Life of tranſports, and prodigious Sallies; there wants nothing but a reaſonable Reſolution

reſolution and holy prudence to make us followers of him and he hath promis'd his Spirit to ſupply that to us; and therefore hath in all things chalk'd out a way for us proportion'd to our ſtrength, complying with our needs, and ſuitable to our Capacities.

Secondly, In the Life of Jeſus we diſcern the Beauty of Holineſs, to attract and invite our love and purſuit of it. How lovely, and with what *majeſtick* Beauty did his Innocence and Goodneſs ſhine? How magnificent and generous did his Charity, and his unſhaken reſolution; how amiable, decorous, and inviting, did his whole Converſation appear? With what aſſurance of Mind, ſerenity of affections, greatneſs of Spirit, did he diſcourſe, and act, enjoy, and ſuffer, purſue all his deſigns, and bear all that befel him. Who can conſider his demean in the hardeſt circumſtances, even when oppos'd, revil'd, and perſecuted, and would not wiſh to be in his caſe, and do as he did; who acquitted himſelf ſo well in e-

very point, and enjoy'd ſo much of God in every Lot? Inſtructions may gain the underſtanding, but ſuch an Example poſſeſſeth our choice and affections; and draws the whole Man to follow willingly in thoſe ways that appear on all ſides ſo beautiful and pleaſant.

Thirdly, Every difficulty in our way is eaſily removed or conquer'd by looking unto Jeſus. Pride and backwardneſs to condeſcend, muſt needs be aſhamed and bluſh, and vaniſh; when we conſider Jeſus the Son of God, in the form of a Servant, miniſtring to the needs of all Men, and humbling himſelf to the Death of the Croſs. Impatience at affronts or injuries, will no longer ſeem reaſonable or tolerable; than till you look unto the meek and patient Jeſus, and ſee him unmoved at the greateſt Calumnies and Inſolencies; praying and dying for the moſt outragious Enemies. We ſhall ceaſe to complain, and repine under our hard fortune; when we bethink our ſelves that

that we are Sinners, and that Jeſus who was free from Sin, bore with perfect ſubmiſſion thoſe heavy and grievous loads, which God laid on him by reaſon of ours. The timorous and baſhful, the faint-hearted muſt be confounded, or elſe inſpired with vigorous reſolution; if they but caſt their Eye upon Jeſus ſtanding before the Chief Prieſt; witneſſing a good Confeſſion before *Pontius Pilate*, hazarding his Life frequently in publiſhing the truth, and ſhedding his Blood willingly for the confirmation of it. For in all this we are to conſider, that it is pride and miſtake of our ſelves that creates the difficulty of doing, or ſuffering the will of God; we have reaſon we think to reſent affronts, or to deny ſuch condeſcenſions, or to complain, or to ſhift for our ſelves, and to be excuſed from hazardous employment. And yet Jeſus who was the moſt perfect and excellent, the beſt of Men, and the Son of God, ſerved God without reſerve; reſign'd himſelf to him without con-

conditions; and by his Example hath taught us, that in ſuch an intire ſurrender of our ſelves to God, we can only find our Intereſt and our Peace. For

Fourthly, From the Life of Jeſus, we are aſſured of the wiſdom of being holy; that when we choſe and act as he did, we cannot be miſtaken. He who was the wiſdom of the Father could not be deceived, nor deceive us; the Life that he led muſt therefore be wiſeſt and fitteſt, moſt agreeable to the nature of Man, and moſt conducing to his Happineſs. He perfectly underſtood the nature of things, and the needs of Men; the real and appearing worth of all the enjoyments of Life; and of what conſideration all the afflictions of it are, both in themſelves and compared with that glory that ſhall be revealed. He could have made the beſt of a proſperous ſtate; yet he neglected the pleaſures of Life; he choſe the Croſs and the Afflictions of Righteouſneſs; he preferred the pleaſures

ſures of Innocence and a good Conſcience, and the enjoyment of God. The reaſon was becauſe his underſtanding was exalted above all the deceptions of Sin and Satan; he ſaw through all the falſe Colours and diſguiſes of the World and the Fleſh; and knew the *real difference* of things. He knew that Holineſs is Truth and Wiſdom, and Perfection, but Sin the Errour, Deluſion, Ignorance, and Folly.

Fifthly, The Example of Jeſus is recommended to our imitation, from the conſideration of his love; for he that loved us to the death, could have no other deſign, in giving us an Example of Life, but to oblige us to purſue our own good; and to ſecure our greateſt intereſts. The love of Chriſt conſtrains us to confeſs the goodneſs of thoſe paths he leads us in; let the World ſay what they will, theſe will have the ſafeſt Iſſue; beſt ſecure our preſent and our Eternal Intereſts. If Humility were not better than Pride, Charity than Ha-

tred, Mercifulneſs than Revenge; if indifferency to the World did not more conſult our Peace and Happineſs than the grandeur and the affluence of it; he that loved us ſo intirely as to lay down his Life for us, would not have led us in ſuch a way; and by his authority and love have obliged us to follow him in it.

Sixthly, When we conſider that Jeſus was both God and Man; we muſt conſider the Life he led, not only as wiſeſt and beſt, but as God-like, and as near to Divinity as was poſſible. So that it is both our Wiſdom and our Intereſt, and our higheſt Dignity, the greateſt Exaltation and perfection that we are capable of, to put on Chriſt, and to walk as he walked. We are therein Followers of God; we do what he did in our nature, or would do if he could enter into the preſent circumſtances of our ſtate. We do that which hath a tendency to exalt our Minds into the neareſt reſemblance, approach and union, with the Divinity it ſelf.

Such

Such is the Influence and Energy of the Example of Jeſus; that (while we ſet it before us) as we have an excellent pattern of the moſt noble and difficult Virtues, ſo it repreſents the whole Circle of our duty, as poſſible and natural, an eaſy, even and ſteady path and courſe of action; as Amiable and Lovely, as reaſonable in all its difficulties which Jeſus had conquer'd for us, as the wiſeſt and beſt meaſure of Life, which the Wiſdom of God and his tender love hath chalked out for us, and as the higheſt dignity and advancement of our nature, whereby we become like God, reſemble as much as may be the Heavenly Pattern, and are partakers of the Divine Nature and Life.

CLOSE.

NOW the inference from all the Premiſes is this; *That we run with patience the race that is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus*, Hebr. 12. 2. That we ſuffer the Divine Light of

his Doctrine and Life to ſhine into our Souls, that we be affected with the true Spirit of his Religion, and in love with his amiable Converſation. That we ſtudy the holy Goſpels for this end, that we may thence receive the Light of Life; that being fill'd with admiration and love of the fervent Godlineſs, and inſuperable unwearied Charity of Jeſus; his condeſcending Humility, Peaceableneſs and Gentleneſs, his unſhaken Reſolution, unvanquiſh'd Fortitude and Patience; and frequently comparing our ſelves with this admirable Pattern, we may bluſh for our Nonconformity, and endeavour to write more exactly after ſo fair a Copy.

Let this conſideration have a place in all our ſelf-reflections, whether we have duly imitated and well repreſented, our deareſt Saviour; or have not rather caſt a ſcandal and reproach upon him. In all our deliberations propound we him for our Example; and let us form our deſigns and proſecute our buſineſs, as we verily

rily believe he would have done. Let us always remember, that to be a Chriſtian is to be made like Chriſt; that to know God as he hath declared him, and to ſerve him as he did, this is the ſumm of our profeſſion and ſubſtance of our Religion. This is the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt to have the true Idea of his Spirit and Life, continually directing and influencing ours: to acquaint our ſelves with God, and with the true meaſures of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; to have our hearts affected with the Beauty and excellency thereof, and to ſtudy to approve our ſelves unto God, after the Pattern that he ſent us from Heaven; according to the Inſtruction and Example of his well-beloved Son.

But what cauſe of reproof, of ſelf-judging and humiliation is this, to the moſt that call themſelves Chriſtians; and yet follow any Example ſooner than that of Chriſt; or elſe make heavy blots and blurs, whilſt writing after ſo fair and admirable a

Copy.

Copy. What a ſcandal is it to ſee how Chriſtians miſtake and miſrepreſent their Maſter and his holy Religion; and what a fatal deluſion is it to think to reconcile contradictions that can never conſiſt. That he who calls himſelf a Diſciple, a Follower of Jeſus, ſhould induſtriouſly conform himſelf to the guiſe and cuſtom of this World, ſhould be led by the Examples of Impudent Vice, afraid to abet forſaken truth and vertue; that the Diſciples of the Innocent and Spotleſs Jeſus, ſhould wallow in carnal delights, lead ſenſual, vain and voluptuous Lives: that the Friend, and thoſe that ſay they have intereſt in the Merciful, Self-denying, and devout Jeſus, ſhould be heaping up Riches by rapin and oppreſſion, or by fraud and unjuſt gain, utter ſtrangers to bounty and works of mercy; or elſe ungodly and profane, or trifling, cold, and formal Devotioniſts. Theſe things can never conſiſt; if our tempers and our lives be not the tranſcript of the Mind and Life of Jeſus,

we may call our ſelves what we pleaſe, but Chriſt will not know us; he will call us Children of the Devil, if we bear his Image and do his Lufts and Pleaſure; and our judgment will be more ſevere, for taking upon us the name of Chriſt, to diſhonour and profane it. *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie and do not the truth*, 1 Joh. 1. 6. If we walk contrary to his Example we fruſtrate the deſign of his appearance, we reproach the Wiſdom of God, that ſent us from Heaven this Light of Life; and if he had not come and ſpoken to us, it had been far better for us; for then we had had no Sin, in compariſon of that heavy load of guilt that will ſink and cruſh every ungodly and wicked Profeſſor of the Chriſtian Name. But if we would adorn our Profeſſion, and honour the Author, and reap the Fruits of it, we muſt walk as Children of the light, *Epheſ.* 5. 8. or as we are exhorted, *Rom.* 13. 12. Let us caſt off the works of darkneſs, and

put

put on the Armour of Light; let us walk honeſtly as in the day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs, not in Strife and Envying; but put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no proviſion for the fleſh to fullfil the Luſts thereof.

And that,(to enforce the Apoſtle's Exhortation with his own Argu-
Rom. 13. 11. ment) *knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of ſleep: for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed.* That the time is coming, when the Members of Chriſt ſhall be univerſally filled with his Spirit, and our Bleſſed Lord be more worthily imitated by, and glorified in his Saints: is an Article of the pious Belief, and hope of good Chriſtians. The Prophecies concerning the excellent effects of his holy Religion, have not yet had their accompliſhment in any tolerable ſenſe; and yet are too plain to be any other ways evaded, than as the Jews may equally avoid the Predictions, from whence

whence we prove, that the Meſſiah is already come. For it is not enough to ſay (with them) that our ſelves are in the fault, that the Prophecies cannot be accompliſhed; and hinder the production of that beautiful Iſſue, which Chriſtianity (according to the Divine Predictions) labours and travels withal. For thoſe Prophecies are expreſs, that it ſhall be delivered of that happy Birth; and bring forth by the *Power* of God. Who will *ſet his hand* to this work, and *cauſe* the Branch of Righteouſneſs to grow up; and *cleanſe* the iniquity of his people, and *cauſe* the Captivity of *Judah* and *Iſrael to return*; and bring them health and cure by *revealing* unto them the abundance *of peace and truth: For behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promiſed*; and this Prediction (as it follows) is ſure as the Covenant of the day and night, firm and irreverſible as the Ordinances of Heaven and Earth. This *Epiphany* of

Jer. 33. 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, &c.

of the Branch, and Reign of Righteouſneſs, Truth and Peace, the New Teſtament-Prophecies teach us to expect at the cloſe of the Chriſtian œconomy; as the Conſummation and finiſhing Scene thereof: When Chriſt ſhall plead his own Cauſe againſt the powers of darkneſs, againſt Sin and Satan which have hitherto reigned; and ſo break their Empire in pieces, that it ſhall never be able to erect it ſelf more.

And now to infer the *Concluſion*; this *Salvation is nearer* than when we
Rev. 14. 15, 18, 19. believed, *the night* of Pagan and Antichriſtian darkneſs *is far ſpent*, the *Harveſt* of the Reformation is already paſt, and we have encouragement to hope the *Vintage* is approaching: when all the Grapes of *Sodom* ſhall be gathered, and caſt into the Wine-Preſs of the wrath of God; when Chriſt ſhall intirely purge his holy Religion from all depravation, and inſpire all that profeſs it with the true Spirit, and fill them with the
Hebr. 10. 24. genuine Fruits thereof. *Let us there-*

fore

fore conſider our ſelves and *one another, to provoke to love and good works, ſo much the more as we ſee* that *day approaching.* By a diligent conforming our ſelves to the *mind* and *life* of Chriſt, ſhewing forth the Excellencies of his Spirit and Converſation, we ſhall prepare the way of the Lord, and walk as thoſe that *look for and love his appearance.* By this we ſhall verify our Prayers, that his *Kingdom may come*; and confirm in our ſelves and others the hope of its approaching. For when the Spirit that reſted on Chriſt, ſhall abide on the generality of his Followers, and his Life be manifeſted in theirs, then ſhall our bleſſed Saviour *be ſatisfied* concerning the *travel of his Soul*, and *glorified in his Saints.* Then ſhall his Kingdom come (as we daily pray) and his Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven, *Amen.* Even ſo come Lord Jeſus; for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever.

FINIS.